Issue 2 | £8.99

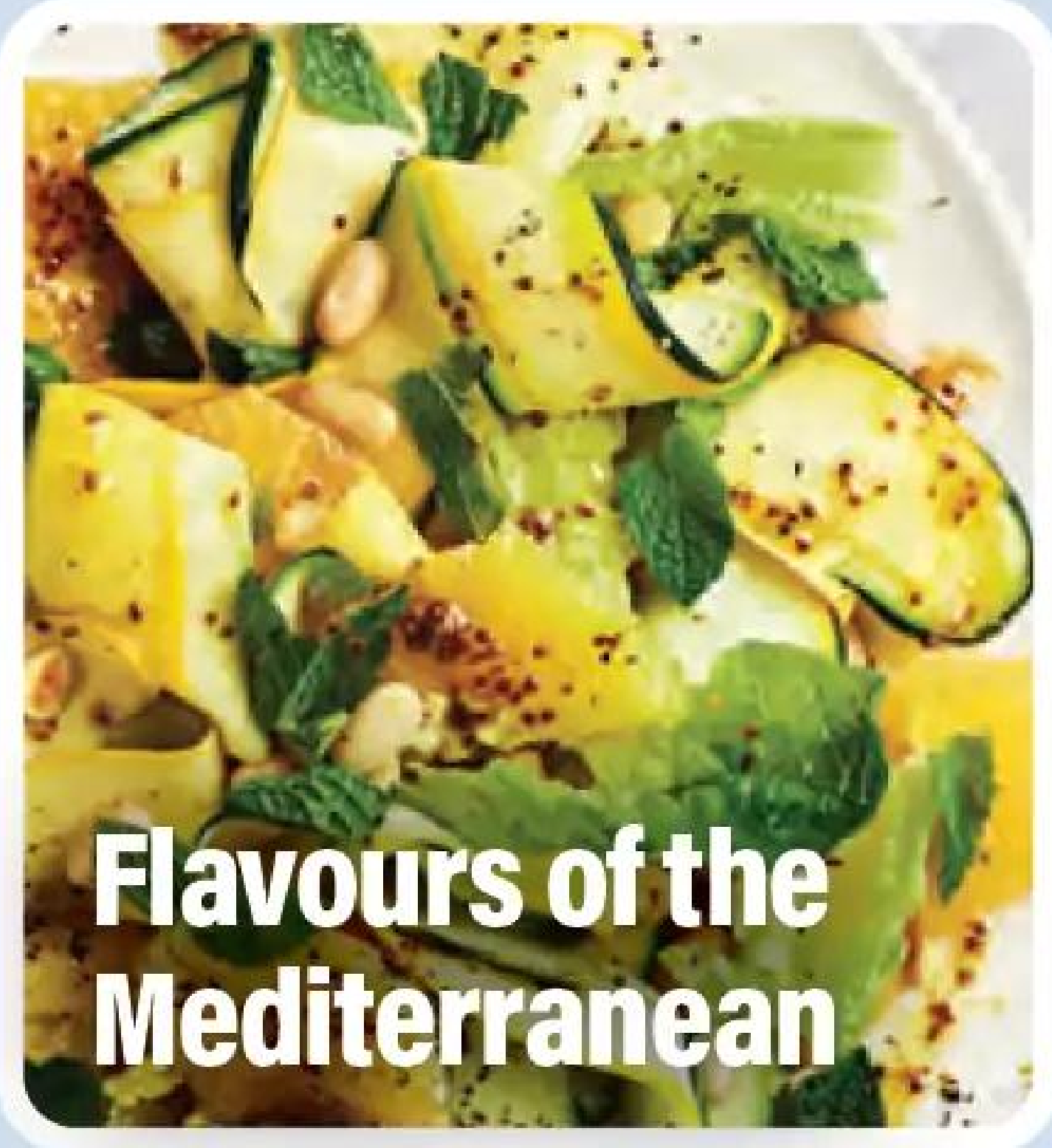
30 DAYS TO Anti-Inflammatory Diet

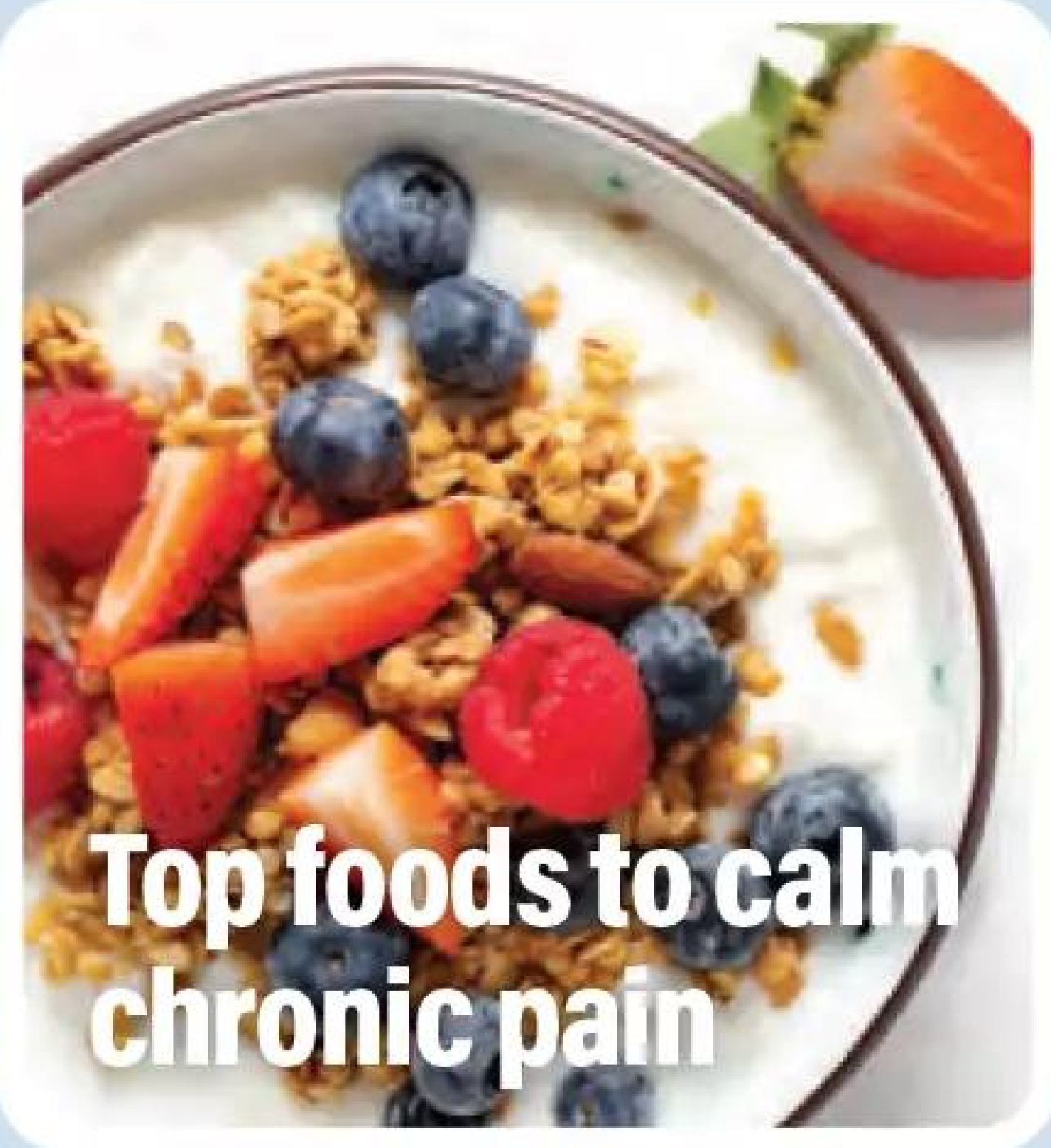
Your **day-by-day** guide to healing and nourishing your body

NEW!

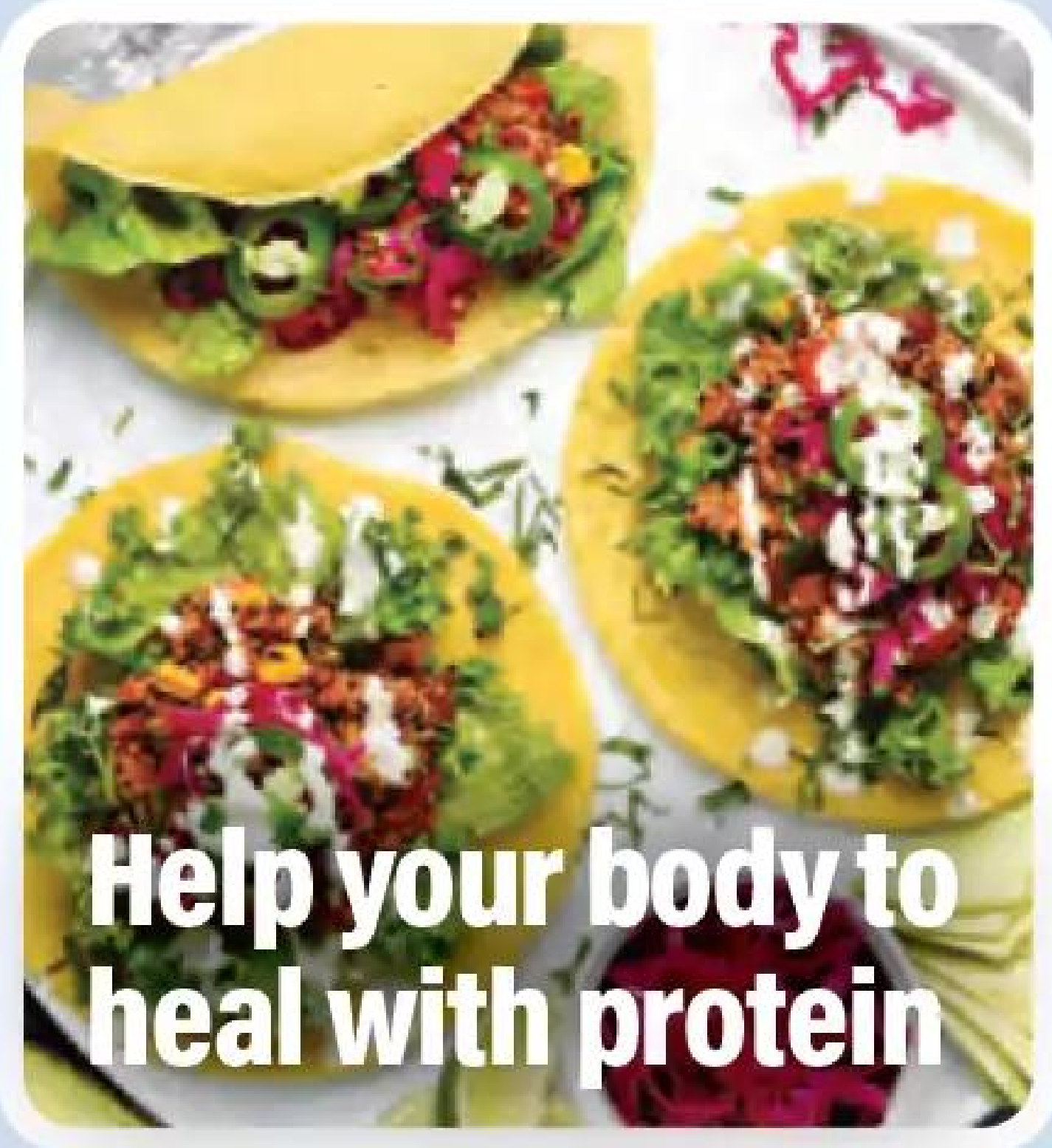
BUILD HEALTHY NEW HABITS
to ease your inflammation

Including **30 ANTI-INFLAMMATORY RECIPES**


Flavours of the Mediterranean

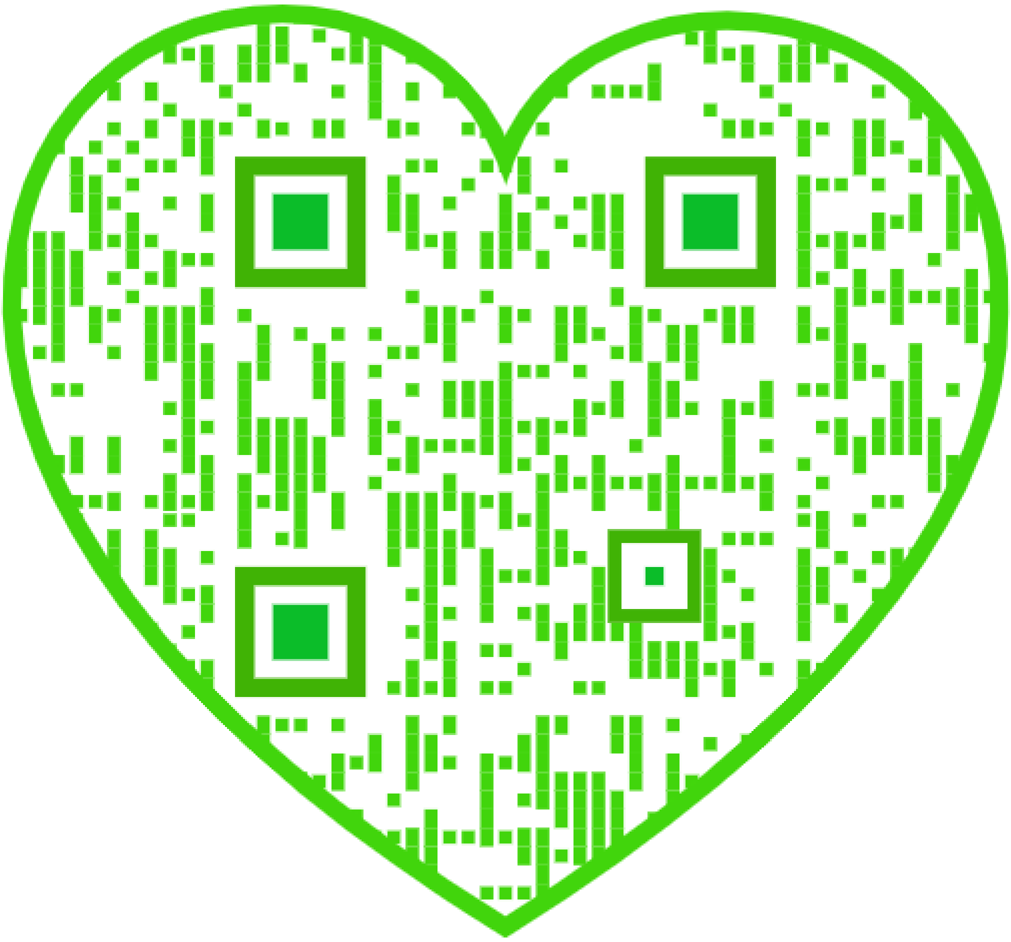

Top foods to calm chronic pain

Make the most of turmeric


Help your body to heal with protein

ANTHEM PUBLISHING

30 days to...
Issue 2
GBP £8.99



Welcome

Living with inflammation, whatever form that takes, can be highly uncomfortable. So the promise of being able to ease your symptoms by following an anti-inflammatory diet sounds amazing. But at the start it can feel a little overwhelming. What exactly is an anti-inflammatory diet? What should you eat and what should you avoid? Is it easy or will it mean having to buy a host of unpronounceable new ingredients?

Over the course of this magazine we'll talk you through everything you need to know and demystify the science behind it all. You'll try out a new habit every day, so that by the end of the 30 days you'll know exactly what you're doing in month two and beyond. By taking it one step at a time, you'll be on the right track in no time at all.

Let's get started...

Sally, Holly & Sarah

The *30 Days To* team

30 DAYS TO Anti-Inflammatory Diet

What you can expect from 30 Days To...

1 **Build healthy habits one day at a time.** Rome wasn't built in a day, and you can't expect your habits to change that quickly either. Making one small change every day makes it all feel much more achievable and less overwhelming.

2 **Make it stick.** Experts say it takes 30 days to build a habit and for your brain to start considering it to be part of your routine. So don't expect everything to come naturally straight away, give yourself time. By the end of the month you'll get there.

3 **Personalise the plan.** We're not expecting you to adopt all 30 habits for the rest of your life. Take stock every week and see which ones sit best with you and are helping. Keep those up, and leave behind the ones that don't work for you.

Inside

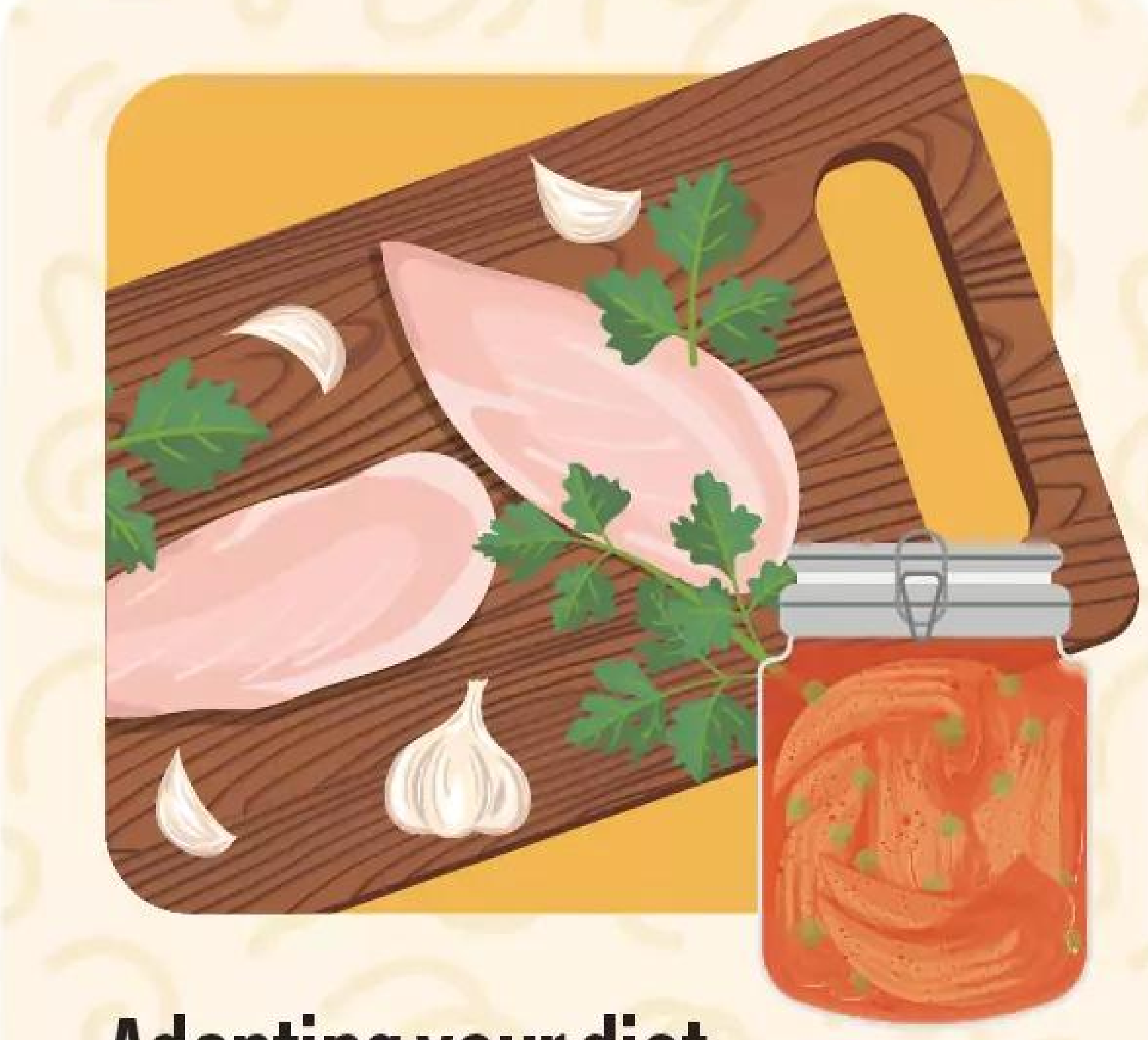
Your 30-Day journey to reducing inflammation in your body starts here

What is an **anti-inflammatory diet?** 14

Focus on... A new simple habit every day

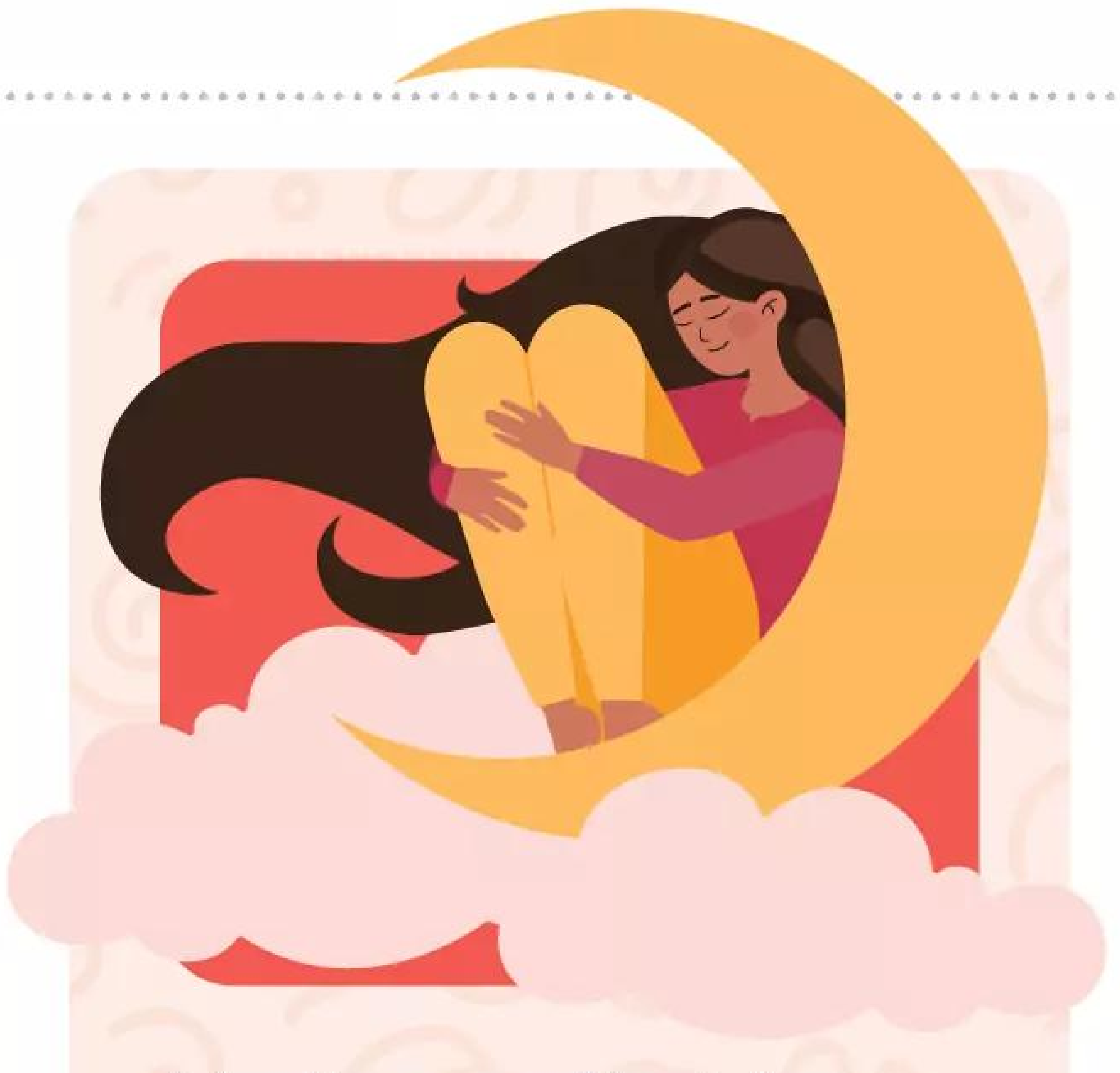
Building the foundations

DAY 1 Cook more from scratch... 20
DAY 2 Swap to whole grains..... 22
DAY 3 Move more............... 24
DAY 4 Eat colourful vegetables .. 26
DAY 5 Use extra-virgin olive oil... 28
DAY 6 Cook with spices......... 30
DAY 7 Eat more fibre............ 32



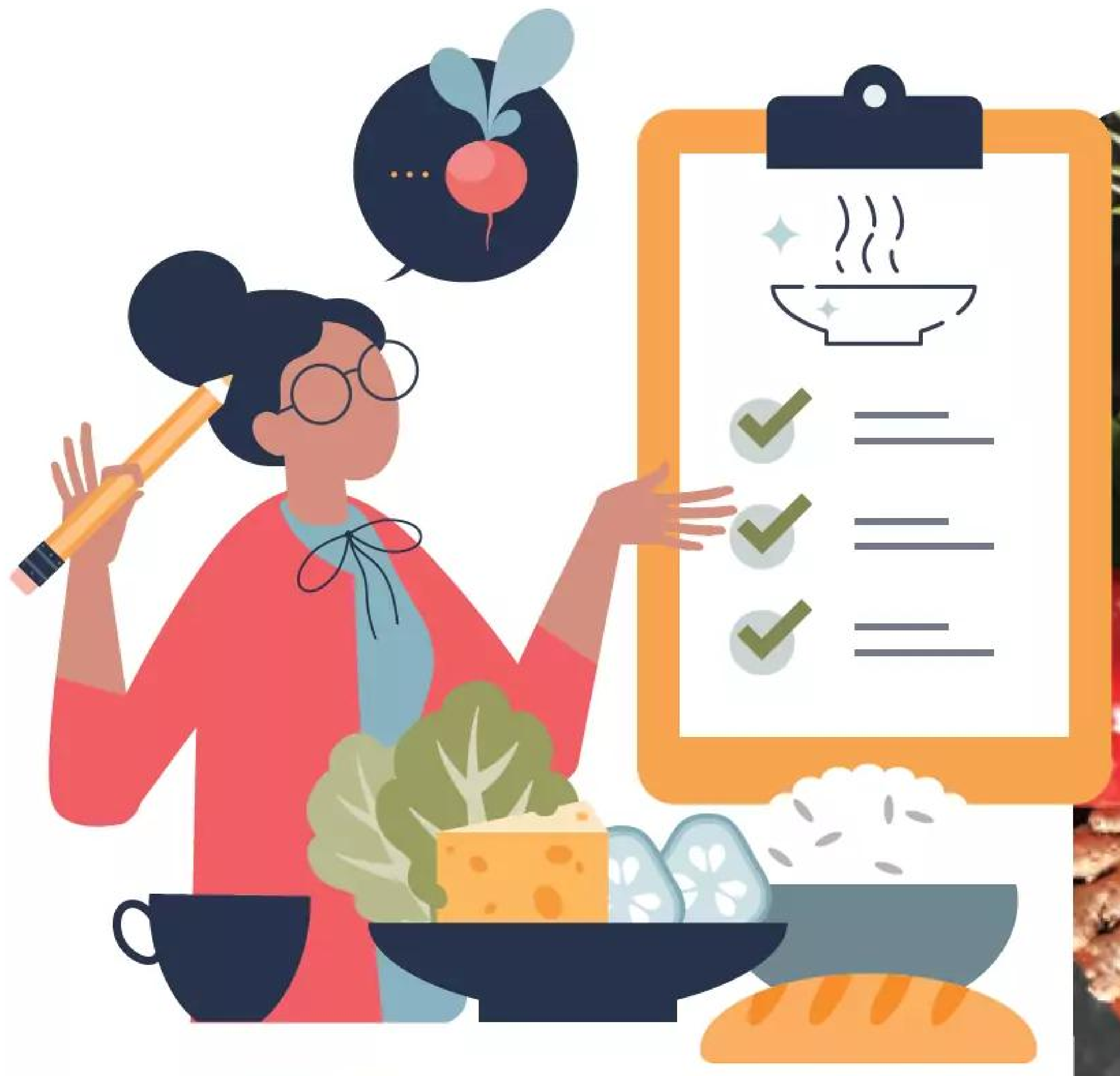
Adapting your diet

DAY 8 Prioritise omega-3s....... 34
DAY 9 Keep hydrated............ 36
DAY 10 Choose quality proteins... 38
DAY 11 Get morning sunlight 40
DAY 12 Plant-focused meals 42
DAY 13 Include fermented foods.. 44
DAY 14 Add fresh herbs 46



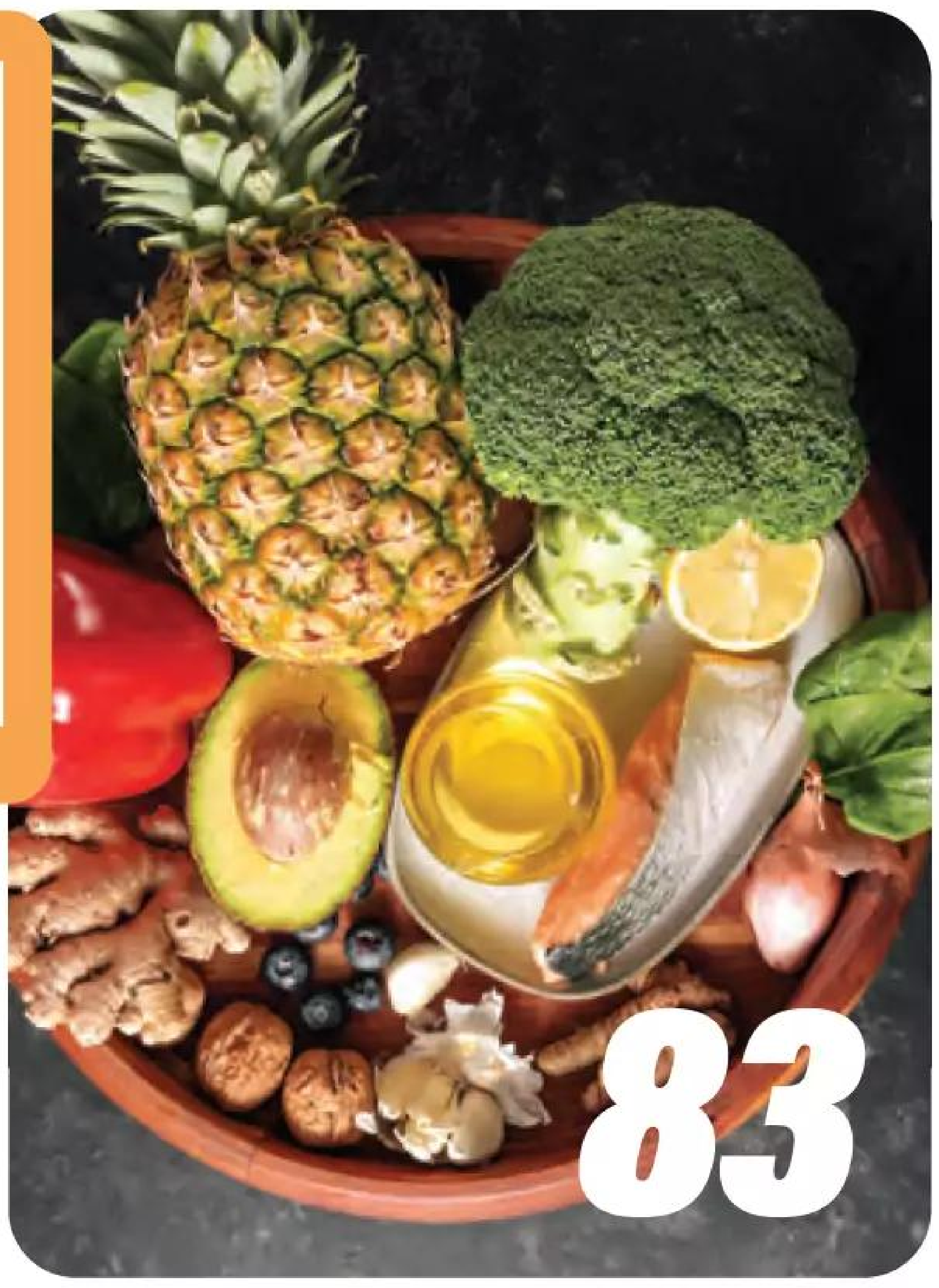
Adapting your lifestyle

DAY 15 Prioritise sleep........... 48
DAY 16 Cooking methods........ 50
DAY 17 Practise deep breathing . 52
DAY 18 Magnesium-rich foods .. 54
DAY 19 Bitters.................... 56
DAY 20 Manage stress........... 58
DAY 21 Laugh more.............. 60



Getting started

What is inflammation? 6
Different types of inflammation 8
How inflamed are you? 12
What is an anti-inflammatory diet? 14

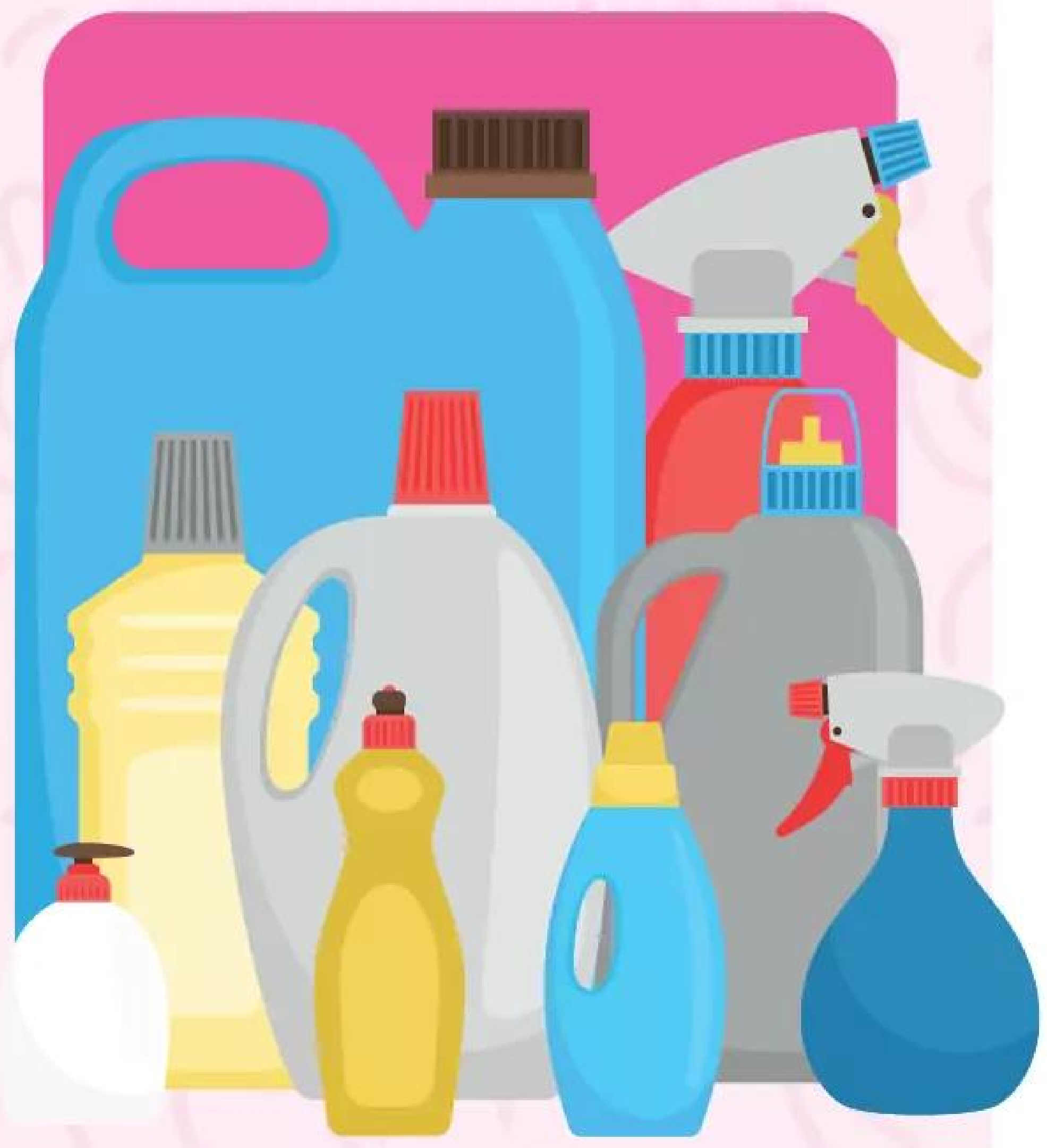


The science

The elimination diet 84
Food sensitivity journal 87
Other diets that can help 88
Top 20 ingredients 92
10 worst ingredients 96
Food swaps 98
Food chart 100
Maintain healthy habits 102
Better sleep 104
Managing stress 107
Exercise and inflammation 110

Creating healthy habits

DAY 22 Try an Epsom salt bath 62
DAY 23 Limit UPFs 64
DAY 24 Start a day with protein 66
DAY 25 Reduce alcohol intake 68
DAY 26 Vitamin D 70
DAY 27 Reduce added sugars 72
DAY 28 Stay socially connected 74

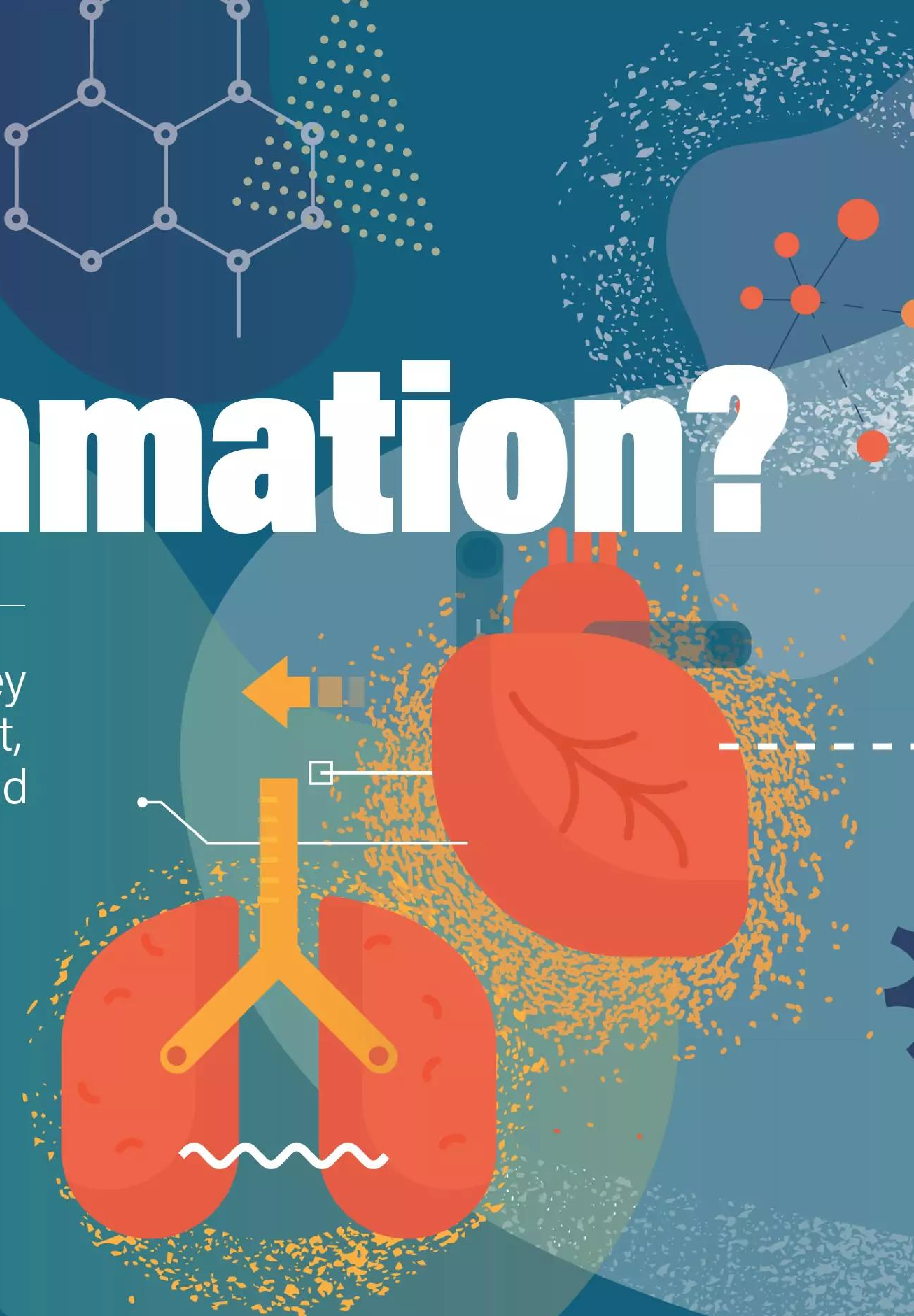


Next steps

DAY 29 Environmental toxins 76
DAY 30 Time-restricted eating 78
Your 30 Days checklist 80
What next? 114

RECIPES OF THE DAY

Spiced baked beans on toast 21
Stuffed butternut squash 23
Tamarind chicken 25
Glow bowl 27
Citrussy courgette salad 29
Kefir smoothie 31
Berry and chia seed breakfast 33
Salmon and herb traybake 35
Butternut and cumin soup 37
Protein tacos 39
Warm chicken salad 41
Moroccan tofu and couscous stew 43
Celeriac miso crisps 45
Smoky griddled aubergine 47
Nature's multivitamin salad 49
Chickpea curry with broccoli rice 51
Turkey croque madame 53
Hot and sour Thai bowl 55
Chicken and cauliflower traybake 57
Falafel salad with onion pickle 59
Root veg salad 61
Dark chocolate mousse 63
Maple cinnamon granola 65
Veggie breakfast tortilla 67
Flora and fruits mocktail 69
Salmon with crispy kale 71
Granola, peaches & yoghurt 73
Greek salad stuffed peppers 75
Griddled halloumi with salsa 77
Chicken Caesar salad 79



What is inflammation?

Words: Fiona Horsfield

Before you start your journey on an anti-inflammatory diet, it's helpful to first understand a little bit more about inflammation and why you might be experiencing it

We have all experienced the feeling of a sore, red area that can develop around a cut as it starts becoming infected, or the swelling that occurs when we have injured ourselves. This is the result of inflammation helping our body to defend itself. When our immune system is triggered by an injury or infection, it uses the process of inflammation to fight it and then help the body heal.

Inflammation is a complex process involving a cascade of actions and different cells and chemical mediators within the body.

Generally, inflammation is a beneficial thing and it has developed to help us survive. However, if it is constantly being activated and this level of inflammation doesn't subside, it actually can cause us damage.

Acute inflammation

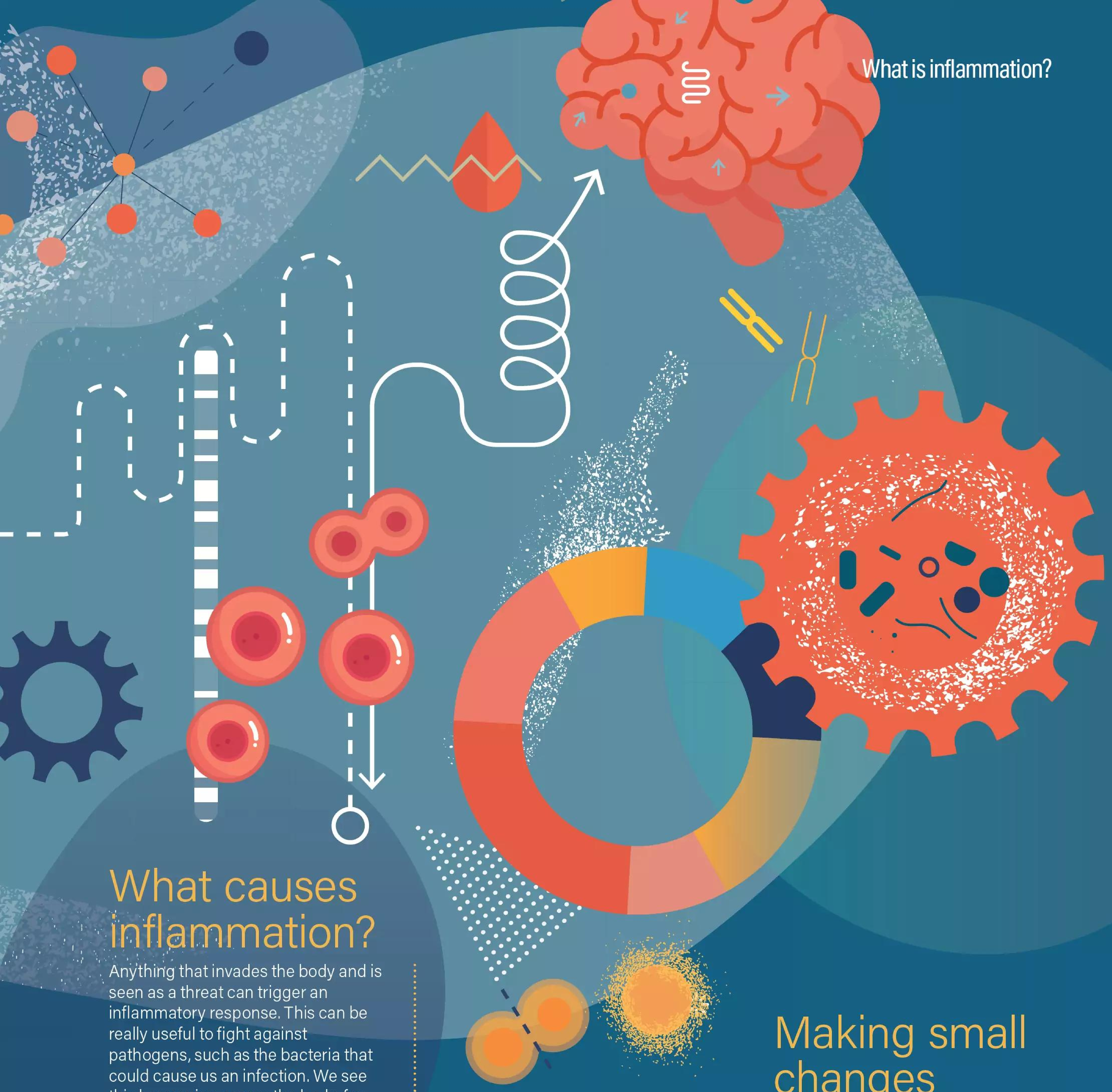
Acute inflammation happens quickly after our body has been hurt, or is exposed to a pathogen such as bacteria, which may cause disease. It usually starts very quickly and then can last for hours or days. The typical features that we experience are developing pain, redness, heat, swelling and the area that has been affected will not function effectively.

The tiny blood vessels that supply the connective tissue around the body are where the main inflammatory activity occurs. In response to an irritant, there are key stages that occur. First, there is an increase in the amount of blood flowing to the area that has been affected. The blood vessels that are carrying this increased volume of blood then start to become more permeable, or leaky. Through this change, immune cells and fluid that help the defence system to operate are able to move into the surrounding tissue. This allows them to help with defence and perform the subsequent repairs on site.

There are signals back and forth that help to control how fast this occurs and also how extensive the inflammatory process needs to be.

The result of this acute inflammatory process ultimately should lead to wound healing or the infection being cleared.

Occasionally the process can get out of control, and acute inflammation can spread to different parts of the body, either through the skin, the muscle, blood or lymph systems. This can cause complications, which range from developing increased scar tissue at the site of an injury, to widespread sepsis, where an infection has set off a widespread inflammatory response that overwhelms the body.



What causes inflammation?

Anything that invades the body and is seen as a threat can trigger an inflammatory response. This can be really useful to fight against pathogens, such as the bacteria that could cause us an infection. We see this happening across the body, for example in the lungs fighting a chest infection, or in the bladder with a urinary tract infection.

Smoking sets off a significant inflammatory response in the lungs and across the body, and frequent smokers will have chronic inflammation as a result.

Obesity results in an increase in fat cells, and the presence of these, in particular across the belly, also cause a chronic inflammatory process.

Some people suffer from auto-immune disorders, where the body mistakenly identifies a normal part of the body as being an intruder, and an attack arises on healthy tissues. Rheumatoid arthritis and Systemic Lupus Erythematous (SLE) are examples of this.

Complications

The importance of chronic inflammation and its effect on our health can't be understated. Chronic inflammatory diseases make up the most significant cause of death in the world. In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) states that these chronic diseases are actually the biggest threat to our health.

The chronic inflammatory diseases that we see having the biggest impact worldwide are diabetes, stroke, obesity, cancer, heart disorders and chronic respiratory diseases. Three out of five people will die from these diseases.

Making small changes

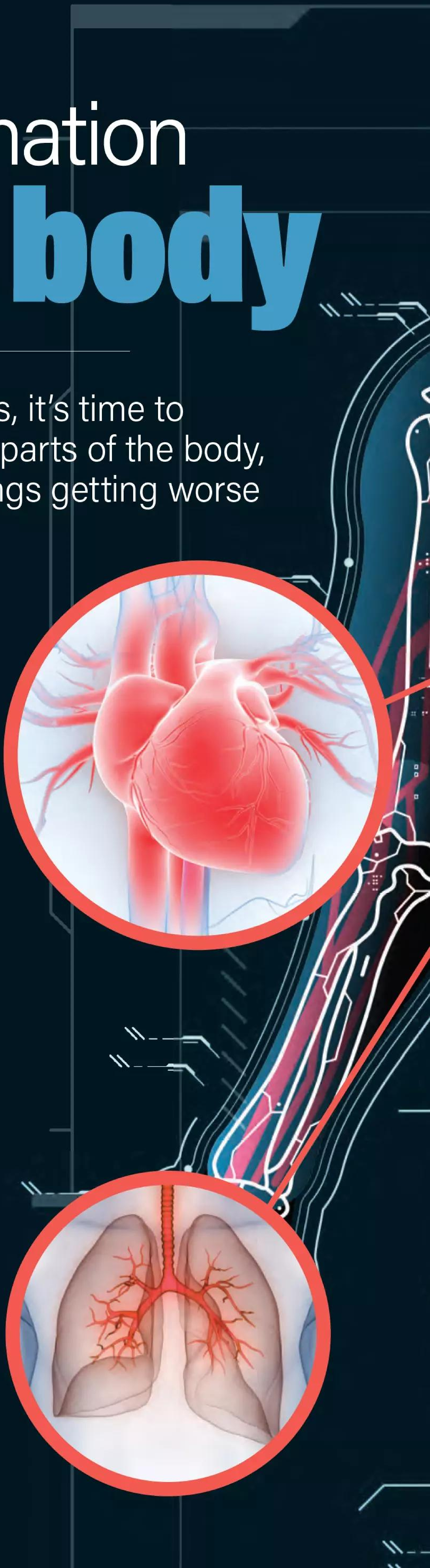
Without inflammation we would not be able to survive. We rely on our body being able to defend itself against all the potential invaders it encounters on a constant basis. Improving our understanding of what inflammation is and the way that our body uses this, in both positive and negative ways, can empower us in our own journey to improve our personal health.

Although we may have little control over our genetics and how we are programmed to respond to some environmental triggers, such as in the development of asthma, or in auto-immune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, there are many aspects that we can make positive changes, including starting to follow an anti-inflammatory diet.

Types of inflammation around the body

Words: Fiona Horsfield

Now we know what inflammation is, it's time to understand how it shows up in different parts of the body, and what we can do to help prevent things getting worse



HEART AND BLOOD VESSELS

Inflammation is a key player behind most heart attacks and strokes. It's important to try to maintain a healthy heart and protect the blood vessels carrying blood around the body from damage. Damage can occur when the blood vessels become inflamed, and trigger the development of atherosclerosis (when cholesterol-rich plaques build up in the blood vessels). The plaques can block arteries, or break off and allow blood clots to form, all due to inflammation. If this happens, it can lead to diseases such as high blood pressure (hypertension), heart attacks, angina and stroke.

Atherosclerosis is a progressive disease, which occurs with age, and most people in their 60s onwards will have a degree of it. Younger people are also at risk of atherosclerosis, depending on their lifestyle.

Unhealthy lifestyle practices can speed up the process of developing atherosclerosis, however having a healthy lifestyle can slow it down. Having someone in the family with heart disease, diabetes or hypertension will make it more likely that we may develop this ourselves.

Current medication exists to prevent further events from happening, but they can't undo damage that already exists. The key thing that we can do to improve our cardiovascular health and reduce the risk of these events happening is to look at our lifestyle and to make positive health changes.

LUNGS

Our lungs come into contact with plenty of pathogens that we breathe in every day and it is primed to get rid of these so that we don't become ill. Two main inflammatory lung diseases that we see regularly are asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Asthma is a lung disease that can come on at any age. The tiny airways in our lungs become inflamed and full of mucous in response to a trigger, such as allergies, smoke, exercise and cold air. It is usually controlled with medications that help to open the airways and reduce the inflammation.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is also very common and comes on later on in life. Usually, it is caused by an inflammatory response caused by damage from smoking. In others it can be from a rare genetic abnormality. Once the damage to the airways has been done unfortunately it can't be reversed, but stopping smoking, and using special inhalers can help slow down the progression of the disease.

BRAIN

The brain has a rich supply of blood and if the blood vessels that supply the brain are also affected by atherosclerosis, then a stroke can occur. This is when an area of the brain doesn't receive enough blood, and therefore oxygen for a period of time, and the brain tissue dies.

Dementia is another disease that is linked to chronic low-level inflammation. The two main types of dementia that we see are Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia, which arise from two very different processes.

Vascular dementia results from the blood flow to the brain becoming impaired, affecting the memory and causing cognitive decline. This can be due to a series of small strokes, or other factors that can affect the blood flow, such as diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure.

Alzheimer's disease is very different, and occurs when there is a build-up of proteins in the brain that cause a strong chronic inflammatory response. This leads to memory loss and cognitive decline. We don't know why this happens, but for some people there is a genetic component to Alzheimer's disease and it can run in families.

We don't have any cures for dementia unfortunately, but we can modify risk factors to try to prevent the onset or slow down the course, and some medications can help.

SKIN

One of the skin's main functions is to protect our body. It is capable of very effective inflammatory responses to keep out invading pathogens. When a chronic inflammatory process is triggered, we see inflammatory skin diseases developing. Psoriasis and eczema are the most common ones.

Eczema usually occurs in children, but can occur in adults too. Psoriasis usually occurs in early adulthood and can be linked with other inflammatory processes such as inflammation in the joints and other immune-mediated conditions. Features include itchy skin patches, which can be red, dry and scaly. Thicker areas (plaques) can occur.

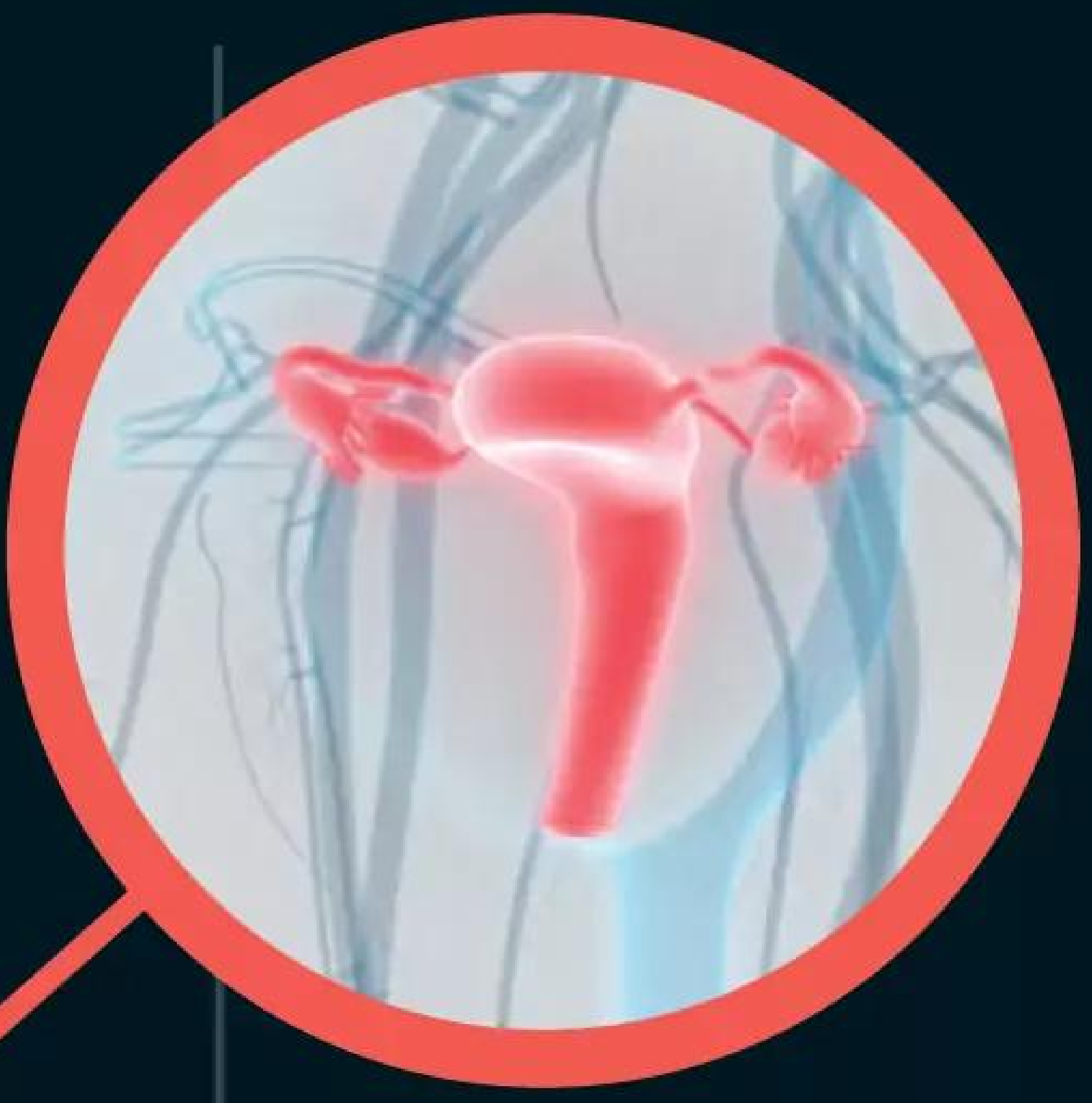
These skin diseases are complex, and although both are very different, they are believed to occur from a combination of genetic, environmental (such as heating, animal dander and hay fever) and lifestyle triggers, such as smoking. These can spark the inflammatory processes that causes the development of eczema or psoriasis.

Many children 'grow out of' eczema by their late teens, but adult-onset eczema can be more stubborn and last longer. Some of the most common skin cancers are also associated with inflammation in the skin. Squamous cell carcinomas and basal cell carcinomas are usually the result of UV radiation damaging the skin and initiating oxidative stress, which set off an inflammatory process.

GUT

Our gut can also be affected by chronic inflammation. Ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease are two of the most common inflammatory bowel conditions. Exactly why they develop is unknown, however genetic, immunological, psychological and dietary factors appear to be significant in ulcerative colitis, and smoking is implicated in Crohn's disease.

These are both life-long conditions, and can cause abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhoea and at times blood or mucous in poo. They are managed with special medications which help reduce the inflammatory response.



CANCER

The development of many types of cancer is linked with chronic low-level inflammation, including lung, prostate and ovarian cancer. Where there is a chronic inflammatory process, the environment is favourable for the development of cancer cells.

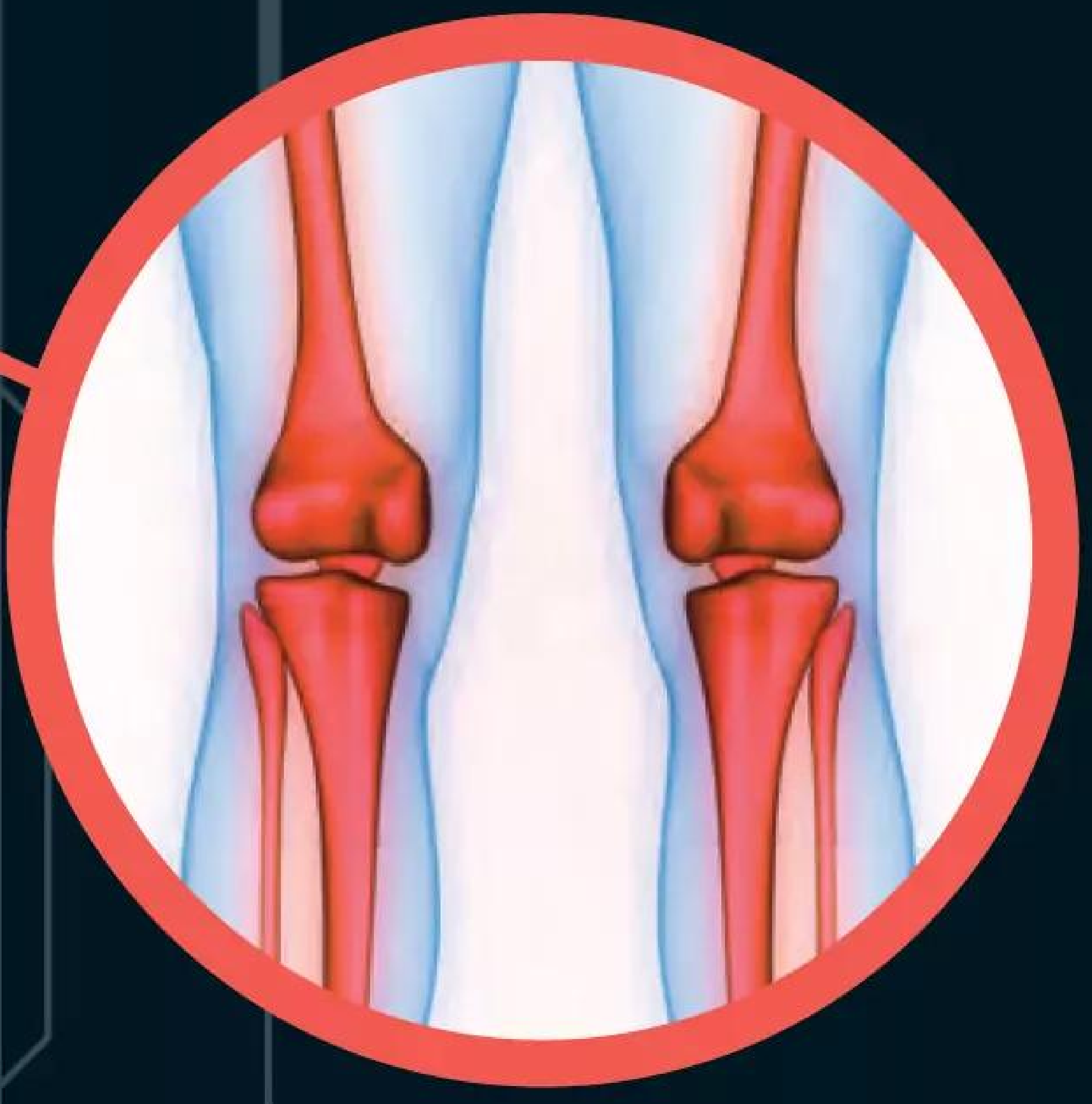
Maintaining a lower level of inflammation in our body can help reduce our risk of developing cancer, and also slow its progression.

JOINTS

Rheumatoid arthritis is a common inflammatory joint disease. It is different to the age-related degenerative arthritis (osteoarthritis) that many people develop. Environmental triggers, combined with being genetically susceptible, set off an autoimmune response and the body starts to attack its joints.

Rheumatoid arthritis can affect people of any age, but usually women in late adulthood. Most people with rheumatoid arthritis are managed by special medications that help to reduce the inflammatory response.

People who suffer from rheumatoid arthritis, and other inflammatory conditions, can develop atherosclerosis earlier in life, and subsequent heart disease.



TOP HEALTH TIPS

Ways to *reduce* inflammation

There are various risk factors that lead to the development of chronic inflammation. These include smoking, obesity, the gut microbiome, high cholesterol and diabetes. Our genetics have a role to play, and while we can't alter the genetic hand that we have been dealt, we have the potential to reduce our risk by modifying factors within our control. By reducing our levels of chronic inflammation, we can help improve our overall health.

SMOKING

Smoking is the number one change that we can make. Nothing about smoking is good for our health!

Tobacco smoke contains thousands of compounds that set off a significant inflammatory reaction throughout the whole body. It also has direct effects on the lungs as the smoke is breathed in, causing lung damage through local inflammation. Smoking also reduces our immune system and makes us more susceptible to picking up other infections and developing cancers.

EXERCISE

Exercise has so many physical and mental health benefits. Taking regular exercise lowers the inflammation levels in our body. It can also reduce our levels of body fat, meaning lower lipid levels in our bloodstream and improved blood pressure. These contribute to lower inflammation levels in our bodies.

Ideally, we should be taking moderate exercise for a minimum of 30 minutes a day on five days out of the week. This could be doing an activity such as walking, dancing or cycling that gets us a bit out of breath – not enough to sing, but still being able to talk.

DIET

If we are overweight, the additional fat cells where fat is deposited contributes to increased levels of inflammation. High levels of cholesterol and lipids in our diet can also lead to unwanted levels of inflammation in the blood vessels.

High levels of salt, such as found in ready meals and processed foods, can also have a damaging effect.

ADDITIONAL MEASURES

✓ We should aim for ideally seven or eight hours of **quality sleep** every night to allow our body to repair.

✓ Trying to reduce the number of **unnecessary medications** – in particular those that can have an effect on our gut microbiome – could help.

✓ By managing our **stress levels** we can help our body to maintain its normal defence system.

How **inflamed** is

Words: Fiona Horsfield

How do you know if you have high levels of inflammation in your body? Take this quiz to work out what levels you may be dealing with, and also what steps you can take to improve your health

1 Thinking about your activity levels, how much exercise do you actually take every week?

☐ **A)** Little specific exercise. Have a sedentary lifestyle, work at a desk job or spend a lot of time sitting. Use mainly a car or public transport to travel between places.

☐ **B)** Take low levels of exercise, but mostly sedentary. Take an occasional walk, gentle bike ride or swim, but not every day.

☐ **C)** Manage at least 30 minutes of exercise on at least five days out of the week where you get out of breath.

2 Thinking about your weight, do you think you are:

☐ **A)** Quite overweight. If you were to have your Body Mass Index (BMI) calculated it would be over 30, and would be classed as 'obese'.

☐ **B)** Aware that you could do with losing a bit of weight, and in particular that you carry additional fat around the stomach area. Your BMI would be 25-30.

☐ **C)** Maintain a healthy weight, with a healthy amount of body fat. This would be recorded as having a BMI between 18.5 and 25.

3 Do you smoke any form of tobacco?

☐ **A)** Yes, am a frequent smoker on most days of the week.

☐ **B)** Yes, but just smoke on the odd occasion.

☐ **C)** Never smoke.

4 How best would you describe the condition of your skin?

☐ **A)** Have regular patches of dry, itchy scaly skin. You may have a history of eczema or psoriasis, hay fever, asthma or allergies.

☐ **B)** Occasionally have small patches of dry, itchy skin but they resolve with using a moisturiser.

☐ **C)** Skin is in good condition, no irritating patches of dry and itchy skin.

5 How often is it that you feel stressed?

☐ **A)** On a regular basis. You may find it hard to sleep or switch off from anxious thoughts, and your appetite and mood may be affected.

☐ **B)** Occasionally stressed, usually in response to a specific event, for example a concern that occurs at work or in the family, but these are usually short lived.

☐ **C)** Low levels of stress, quite relaxed most of the time.

6 How would you most closely describe your diet?

☐ **A)** Eat mostly ready meals, for example microwave meals or takeaways, with sugary snacks.

☐ **B)** Eat a variety of different foods, including fruit and vegetables, but also frequently eat sugary snacks or fatty foods, such as crisps and ready meals.

☐ **C)** Eat a healthy balanced diet with home cooked meals based on vegetables and mainly snacks low in saturated fat and sugar.

7 How would you describe your response to allergens?

☐ **A)** Suffer frequently from hay fever, or have a frequent runny nose. May have asthma or eczema that requires regular medication.

☐ **B)** Occasionally suffer from hay fever or itchy dry skin patches that can be managed with medication from the chemist and then resolve.

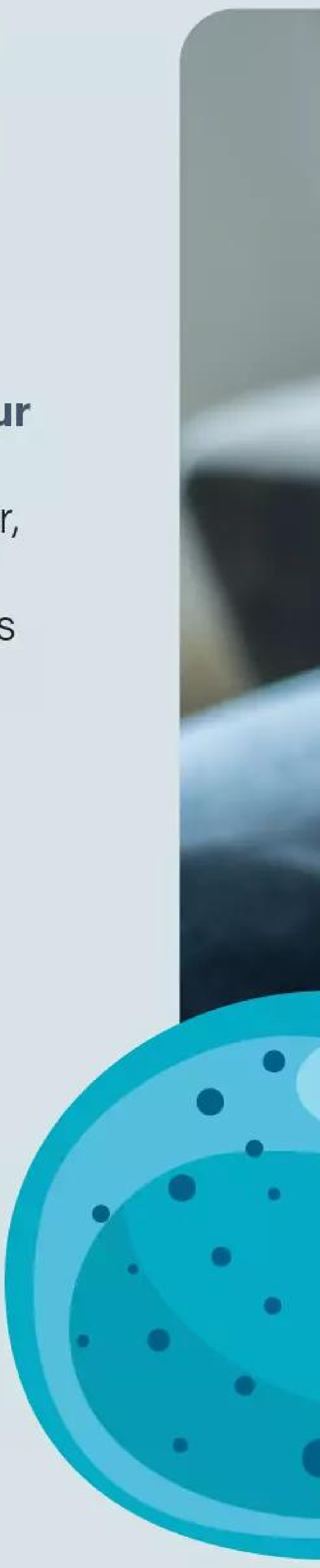
☐ **C)** No bother from any allergies.

8 How much alcohol do you drink?

☐ **A)** Drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week.

☐ **B)** Drink under 14 units of alcohol a week, but still drink most weeks.

☐ **C)** No alcohol or only occasional alcoholic beverage consumed.



your body?

Results

Mostly answer A:

Your body may be undergoing high levels of chronic inflammation. Lifestyle factors, such as smoking, a high stress or sedentary lifestyle, and obesity, will trigger and sustain chronic inflammation in your body. This may lead to damage across the body, in particular in the blood vessels that supply the heart and brain. Lots of positive changes can be made – to avoid being overwhelmed it's worth considering one thing at a time.

Involving others in your activities is a good way to maintain motivation, for example going for a family bike ride or join a slimming club alongside trying an anti-inflammatory diet.

Mostly answer B:

Your lifestyle may be contributing to moderate levels of chronic inflammation, but you are also making some positive lifestyle choices that are helping your overall health. It is worth looking at the areas that you can make even more improvements to reduce these inflammation levels further – for example more regular exercise, stopping smoking or reducing alcohol, alongside exploring an anti-inflammatory diet.

Mostly answer C:

The level of chronic inflammation in your body is likely quite low. You will experience acute inflammatory responses as is normal in response to an injury or infection, however these processes are likely to be kept in check. These positive lifestyle practices that you have adopted are helping keeping you healthy, and hopefully you can pick up even more healthy habits throughout this magazine. Keep up the good work!

What is an anti-inflammatory diet?

Words: Rob Hobson

Now we understand all about inflammation, it's time to discover how the food that you eat can help to ease the symptoms

Several factors can exacerbate inflammation in the body, but what you choose to eat can have a particularly significant impact. While certain foods can aggravate inflammation, overeating and choosing foods with a high energy density can increase the risk of obesity. Being overweight or obese can significantly impact inflammation, as enlarged fat tissue caused by excessive calorie intake triggers the release of pro-inflammatory molecules and activates the immune system, releasing immune cells. The combination of these processes promotes system inflammation throughout the body.

An anti-inflammatory diet is an approach that focuses on reducing chronic inflammation in the body. There is no specific 'anti-inflammatory diet' with rules and guidelines. However, several diets fit the mould of eating mostly plant-based, unprocessed foods. The most common anti-inflammatory diets are the Mediterranean and DASH diets.

How can diet help to reduce inflammation?

You need to eat less inflammatory and more anti-inflammatory foods to reduce inflammation. Basing your diet on whole and unprocessed foods means that you will be getting a better supply of the nutrients that help to quell inflammation in the body, primarily antioxidants.

Antioxidants include specific vitamins, minerals and plant compounds that work to reduce levels of free radicals. These reactive molecules are created as a natural part of your metabolism. Still, they can lead to inflammation when they're not controlled. Nutrients, such as fibre, have also been shown to help reduce markers for inflammation, such as C-reactive protein (CRP).

Vegetarian and vegan diets are also linked to reduced inflammation, partly because they are rich in nutrient-dense plant-based foods.

Avoiding certain foods can help to reduce the damage caused by inflammation, as can eating other foods that are particularly rich in antioxidant compounds.

What foods and drinks encourage inflammation?

It would be best if you tried to limit the following foods in your diet as much as possible:

- Refined carbohydrates (white bread, pasta and rice)
- Sugar and all other sweeteners, including honey, agave and syrups
- Sugary drinks (this includes fruit juice after one daily serving)
- Red meat
- Processed meats
- Fried foods (such as chips and takeaway offerings)

What factors contribute to inflammation?

UNHEALTHY LIFESTYLE FACTORS: sedentary lifestyle, smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, inadequate sleep.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS: pollution and exposure to toxins and certain chemicals.

POOR DIET: processed foods, bad fats, refined sugars, alcohol.

STRESS: activates the release of stress hormones that can lead to an inflammatory response.

WHAT DOES A TYPICAL DAY'S FOOD LOOK LIKE?

It is simple to incorporate anti-inflammatory foods into your daily diet and such meal ideas include:

BREAKFAST IDEAS

○ Porridge oats topped with seeds and berries

○ Mashed avocado on wholewheat bread

○ Fruit salad (including berries) with wholewheat toast spread with nut butter

LUNCH IDEAS

○ Rocket and tomato salad with grilled salmon

○ Kale and spinach frittata with steamed broccoli

○ Scrambled eggs (made with turmeric) and salad

DINNER IDEAS

○ Stir fry (made with green vegetables) with tofu and buckwheat noodles

○ Mixed bean chilli served with sliced avocado

○ Chicken and vegetable curry (including spinach) and brown rice

SNACK IDEAS

○ Nuts

○ Seeds

○ Homemade energy balls (made with raw cacao)

○ Edamame (soy) beans

○ Crisp rye bread topped with guacamole

○ Yoghurt with berries

It's a fact that diet has a big role in preventing chronic inflammation. An anti-inflammatory approach to food, such as the Mediterranean diet, can help reduce inflammation risk. Eating this way and choosing moderate portion sizes can also help you manage your weight more effectively, which has a considerable impact on keeping inflammation at bay.

What foods can help to fight inflammation?

Include plenty of these foods:

- Fruits and vegetables (especially dark green leafy varieties)
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Whole grains (oats, wholemeal bread, pasta and rice)
- Beans, pulses and lentils
- Oily fish (salmon, trout, mackerel and herring)

These foods contain compounds that are shown to have anti-inflammatory effects. Such compounds include polyphenols and carotenoids found in brightly coloured fruits and veg.

Anthocyanins are a group of polyphenolic pigments that confer blue and purple colour to foods, such as blueberries and red cabbage. These compounds have anti-inflammatory effects that may reduce your disease risk and have been linked to a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease.

Oily fish are rich in anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids. Studies have found that people consuming salmon regularly show reductions in the inflammatory marker C-reactive protein.

Research suggests that

following a Mediterranean diet and supplementing with extra-virgin olive oil can significantly decrease inflammatory markers. The effect of an antioxidant compound called oleocanthal (which gives olive oil the peppery taste when you swallow it) has been compared to anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen.

Other anti-inflammatory foods include apples that contain the flavonoid quercetin, which, like other compounds, has been shown to reduce inflammation in the body.

How can an anti-inflammatory diet improve your health?

Mediterranean diet research has provided the most robust evidence proving the health benefits of an anti-inflammatory diet.

A study of nearly 26,000 women found that those who followed this diet had a 25 per cent lower risk of developing cardiovascular disease over 12 years. This study examined a range of underlying mechanisms that might account for this reduction and found that changes in inflammation, blood sugar and body mass index were mainly responsible for his reduced risk.

The same benefits were seen in a meta-analysis of 16 prospective cohort studies following more than 22,000 women for an average of 12.5 years. Those with the highest adherence to a Mediterranean diet showed a 24 per cent lower risk of cardiovascular disease and a 23 per cent lower risk of premature death than those with the lowest adherence.

A large cohort study following 10,670 women, aged 57-61, looked at the effect of dietary patterns on ageing. Healthy ageing was defined as living to 70 years or more and having no chronic diseases (such as type 2 diabetes, kidney disease, lung disease, Parkinson's disease, cancer) or significant declines in mental health, cognition, and physical function. The study found that women following a Mediterranean eating style were 46 per cent more likely to age healthily. Increased intake of plant foods, as well as including whole grains and fish, alongside a moderate alcohol intake and low intake of red and processed meats, were thought to contribute to this finding.

How a diet can be made more anti-inflammatory

An anti-inflammatory diet is primarily plant-based and includes daily whole grains, olive oil, fruits, vegetables, beans and other legumes, nuts, herbs and spices. Generally, animal proteins are eaten in small quantities, and fish (especially oily) and poultry are preferred over red meat.

The general guidance for an anti-inflammatory diet includes:

- **Always opt for whole grains**, such as brown rice, pasta and bread that are all higher in fibre and other nutrients versus their white counterparts.

- **Include plenty of fruits and vegetables** in your diet; the brighter and more varied your intake, the better. This includes a good intake of beans, lentils and pulses that are very high in fibre and antioxidant compounds.

- **Focus on healthy fats**; olive oil is the primary fat that you add to foods and cook with. Other foods naturally high in healthy fats include avocados, nuts and oily fish like salmon, trout and sardines.

- **Choose fish twice weekly** and other animal proteins of poultry, eggs, and dairy (cheese or yoghurt) in smaller portions daily or a few times a week. Red meat should be limited to a few times monthly, and processed meats should be avoided or only eaten occasionally.

- **Water should be your main beverage**, but research has suggested that a small glass of red wine may have anti-inflammatory benefits (although alcohol should never be considered a healthy drink).

Win!

Be in with a chance to win one of these excellent steamers – perfect for creating healthy, nutritious meals for the whole family

A Lakeland Digital Steamer

The Lakeland 3-Tier Digital Steamer makes steaming your food quicker and easier. Forget heavy pans filled with boiling water – just load up the tiers, set the timer and off it goes! With three stacking tiers – each with a generous 4 litre capacity – you can cook three different foods at once. This digital steamer is easily controlled via the LCD display, and has dedicated programmes for cooking meat and poultry, fish, vegetables, rice, and eggs – allowing you to steam delicious meals to perfection. Find out more at www.lakeland.co.uk

- ✓ **Electric steamer that's easy to use and easy to clean**
- ✓ **Steaming is one of the best ways of cooking for an anti-inflammatory diet**
- ✓ **Nests together for efficient, compact storage**

Worth **£69.99**

LAKELAND
0:16
on/off
mode
Hr/min
+
–

How to enter

For your chance to win a Lakeland Digital Steamer, simply answer the following question at the link below:

How many tiers does the Lakeland Digital Steamer have?

2, **3**, or **4**

Enter online at:

tinyurl.com/steamercomp

or scan the QR code

Terms & conditions: Competition is open to all UK residents aged above 18 years. Only one entry per person. By entering you are agreeing to receive emails from Anthem Publishing. You can unsubscribe from these messages at any time. For full terms and conditions, visit anthem.co.uk/competition. Closing date: 31st May 2025.

How it works

Now we know what inflammation is, it's time do something about it. Over the following pages, VJ Hamilton will share **30 simple habits** to help you become less stressed, sleep better and eat healthier, one day at a time.

WEEK 1

BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS

Cook more from scratch 20
Swap out refined grains 22
Make movement a habit 24
Eat a variety of vegetables 26
Use extra-virgin olive oil 28
Cook with spices 30
Fibre and gut health 32

WEEK 2

ADAPTING YOUR DIET

Prioritise omega-3s 34
Hydrate well 36
Choose quality proteins 38
Get morning sunlight 40
Make meals more plant-focused ... 42
Include fermented foods 44
Add fresh herbs 46

WEEK 3

ADAPTING YOUR LIFESTYLE

Prioritise sleep 48
Cooking methods 50
Practise deep breathing 52
Eat magnesium-rich foods 54
Eat bitter foods 56
Manage stress effectively 58
Laugh more 60

WEEK 4

BUILDING HEALTHY HABITS

Try an Epsom salt bath 62
Limit ultra-processed foods 64
Start the day with protein 66
Reduce alcohol intake 68
Vitamin D 70
Reduce added sugars 72
Stay socially connected 74

WEEK 5

NEXT STEPS

Reduce environmental toxins 76
Try time-restricted eating 78

DAY 1

Today focus on cooking from scratch

Eating less processed food gives you more control and reduces inflammatory additives

Relying less on processed foods is one of the most effective ways to reduce inflammation. Ultra-processed foods often contain refined oils, preservatives, and additives that can trigger inflammatory pathways in the body. These ingredients can contribute to oxidative stress and gut imbalances, both of which are linked to chronic inflammation. When you cook from scratch, you have complete control over the ingredients, ensuring they are nutrient-dense and free from hidden sugars, artificial flavours, and other inflammatory ingredients.

Another benefit of home cooking is being able to add anti-inflammatory ingredients. Fresh herbs, colourful vegetables, healthy fats like extra-virgin olive oil, and lean proteins all contribute to an anti-inflammatory diet. You can also avoid excess salt and sugar often found in restaurant meals and takeaways.

Here's how to get started with cooking from scratch

Making meals at home doesn't mean spending hours in the kitchen. Start with simple meals based on whole foods, such as soups, stews, and traybakes. One easy option is baking salmon with vegetables and olive oil for 15 minutes – quick, nutritious, and also packed with anti-inflammatory benefits. Batch-cooking and freezing portions help maintain this habit on busy days. Keep your cupboards stocked with whole food staples like legumes, grains, and spices to make meal prep easier.

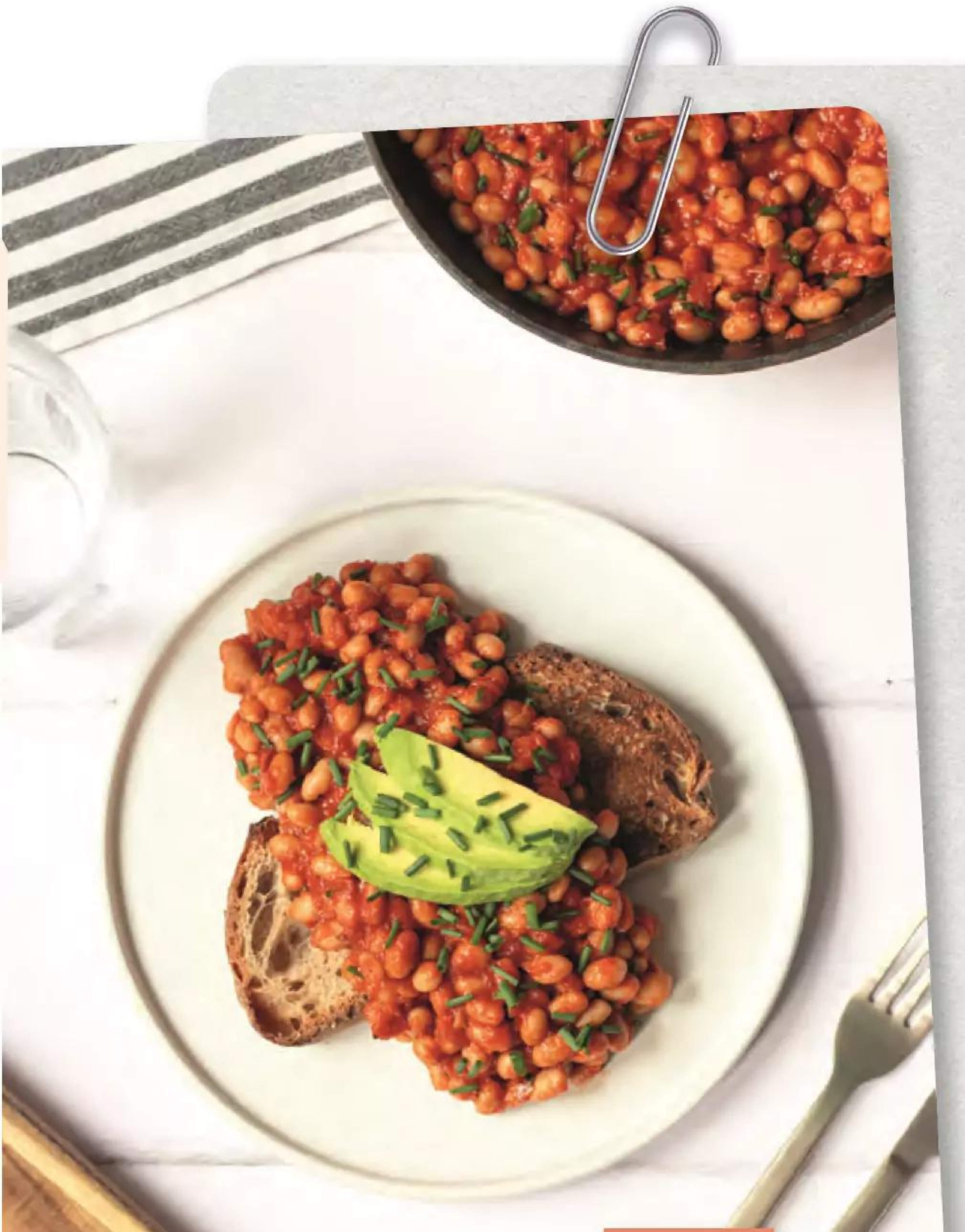
Make it easy

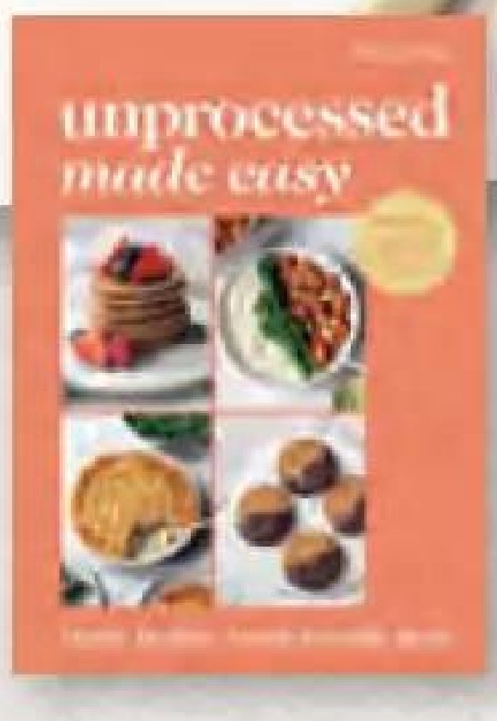
Plan a few go-to meals each week and batch-cook to save time. Start with simple one-pan meals, such as roasted vegetables with fish or chicken.

4 *ways* to make your favourite foods at home

Swap your go-to supermarket buys for some homemade goodness

Instead of...	...try this!
Baked beans	Avoid the added sugar by making your own – and packing in even more great taste (see recipe above right).
Pre-made salad dressings	It's simple to make delicious dressings at home. Start with a quality olive oil and play around with flavour.
Stock cubes	Make your own stock by saving any bones or vegetable offcuts and simmering with herbs and water.
Ready meals	A few spices will go a long way in helping you to make tasty curries and stir-fries from scratch.





Recipe taken from *Unprocessed Made Easy* by Delicia Bale, published by Ebury, £20.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Spiced baked beans on toast

These homemade beans have far less sugar, but are packed with spicy, smoky flavour

By Delicia Bale

Serves **4** | Prep **10 mins** | Cook **25-30 mins**

1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, finely diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 tbsp tomato purée (paste)
½ tsp smoked paprika
¼ tsp dried thyme
1 tbsp soy sauce
2 x 400g tins (3⅓ cups) of haricot (navy) beans, drained
200g (scant 1 cup) passata
salt and black pepper

To serve
toasted sourdough bread
½ an avocado, sliced
chopped chives
chilli flakes (optional)

1 In a pan, heat the oil, add in the onion and cook for a few minutes until soft.

2 Once this is done, add in the garlic and the tomato purée and continue cooking for a few minutes.

3 Now add in the smoked paprika, thyme, soy sauce, drained haricot beans and passata and season with salt and pepper.

4 Simmer gently for 15-20 minutes until the sauce has thickened.

5 Serve with toast and top with avocado, chives and chilli flakes, if using.

Habit tracker

Today I... Cooked at least one meal from scratch

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Porridge with blueberries and flaxseeds

Lunch

Lentil and spinach soup

Dinner

Grilled salmon with quinoa, broccoli and a turmeric and ginger dressing

DAY 2

Today focus on eating whole grains

Quinoa, buckwheat and wild rice provide more fibre and nutrients than refined grains

Make it easy

Batch-cook a large pot of quinoa, brown rice, or millet to start the week and have on hand for quick meals. Make overnight oats or millet porridge for a nutrient-dense, easy breakfast. If switching entirely is overwhelming, start by gradually replacing refined grains with whole grains in one meal per day.

Refined grains, such as white bread, pasta and white rice, have been stripped of their fibre, vitamins and minerals, leaving behind a product that digests quickly and causes blood sugar spikes. Over time, frequent consumption of refined grains can contribute to insulin resistance, inflammation and poor gut health. In contrast, whole grains retain their fibre and nutrients, supporting digestive health, stable energy levels, and reduced inflammation.

Get started with whole grains

Whole grains like quinoa, brown rice, buckwheat and millet are rich in fibre, antioxidants and essential minerals, such as magnesium and zinc. These nutrients not only help regulate blood sugar levels, but also feed beneficial gut bacteria, promoting a balanced microbiome and reducing chronic inflammation. Research currently suggests that diets high in whole grains are associated with lower risks of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and obesity, as well as improved digestive health and metabolic function.

Here's how you can get started with whole grains:

- **Swap refined grains for whole versions** – replace white rice with brown, wild or black rice, and use quinoa or millet as a base for salads and grain bowls.
- **Incorporate variety** – experiment with buckwheat pancakes, wholegrain wraps, or teff porridge instead of refined grain-based breakfast options.
- **Opt for wholegrain pasta and bread** where possible, choosing options with minimal processing and added fibre.

Five whole grains to work into your diet

Make the switch to these whole grains and you will feel the difference

Rich in fibre

Brown rice
Serving size: **100g (cooked)**

Protein boost

Oats
Serving size: **40g**

Extra vitamins

Whole wheat
Serving size: **75g (uncooked pasta)**

Complex carbohydrates

Quinoa
Serving size: **185g**

High in fibre

Corn
Serving size: **100g**

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Buckwheat stuffed butternut squash with parsley pesto

Buckwheat is a nutritious whole grain that's high in protein and fibre

By Liz Sinner (*vegelizious.com*)

Serves **4** | Prep **15 mins** | Cook **25 mins**

125g (1 cup) buckwheat
275ml (1¼ cups) vegetable stock/bouillon (broth)
1 butternut squash
100g (1 cup) leeks
100g (⅔ cup) carrots
125g (½ cup) celeriac
125g (¾ cup) chickpeas (garbanzo beans), rinsed
nutmeg
paprika powder
salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the parsley pesto
30g (½ cup) fresh parsley
½ tsp garlic powder
75g (⅓ cup) olive oil
2 tbsp sunflower seeds
salt and freshly ground black pepper
sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, sprouts, to garnish (optional)

1 Rinse the buckwheat with water. Place in a saucepan and add the vegetable stock. Simmer for 10 minutes. Cover and leave to rest for another 5 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, cut the butternut squash in half. Remove the seeds with a spoon. Brush with a little olive oil and roast in the air fryer for 20-25 minutes at 180°C/370°F, cut-side down. When cooked, scoop out some of the flesh and cut into cubes.

3 Finely chop the leeks and dice the carrots and celeriac.

4 Heat a little sunflower oil in a frying pan and sauté the vegetables for 5 minutes. Add the chickpeas and season to taste with nutmeg, paprika, salt and pepper. Add the cooked buckwheat and butternut flesh to the vegetables and stir well.

5 Place all the ingredients for the pesto in a food processor and blend until smooth and creamy.

6 Fill the roasted butternut halves with the buckwheat vegetable mixture and top with the parsley pesto. Garnish with sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds and sprouts, if desired.

Habit tracker

Today I... Swapped refined grains for whole grains

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	Notes
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Porridge with blueberries and flaxseeds

Lunch

Quinoa salad with butternut squash and tahini dressing

Dinner

Baked garlic chicken with sweet potato mash and green beans

DAY 3

Today focus on moving more

Walking, stretching, yoga, or strength training all help lower inflammatory markers

Regular movement is essential for reducing inflammation, improving circulation, and supporting immune health. Exercise helps regulate immune function by lowering levels of pro-inflammatory markers, such as C-reactive protein (CRP) and interleukin-6 (IL-6). Studies show that even moderate physical activity, such as walking, can lead to a measurable reduction in inflammation. Movement also plays a crucial role in lymphatic drainage, which is essential for detoxification and immune function, as the lymphatic system relies on muscle contractions to circulate lymph fluid and remove waste from the body.

Beyond anti-inflammatory benefits, exercise is linked to better insulin sensitivity, improved cardiovascular health and enhanced mood. Regular movement stimulates the release of endorphins, the body's feel-good chemicals that help reduce stress and regulate cortisol levels. Strength training, yoga, and low-impact cardio can all provide benefits, from building muscle and joint stability to improved flexibility and circulation. Importantly, you don't need long workouts – even short bursts of movement during the day can make a significant difference.

Get started with daily movement

Find ways to move that fit into your lifestyle. Take a 10-minute walk after meals to support blood sugar balance and digestion. Try a quick home workout, stretch break, or some yoga poses before bed. If you sit for long periods, set a reminder to stand up and move every hour. Simple activities like gardening, dancing to a favourite song, or playing with a pet also count as movement and contribute to better health.

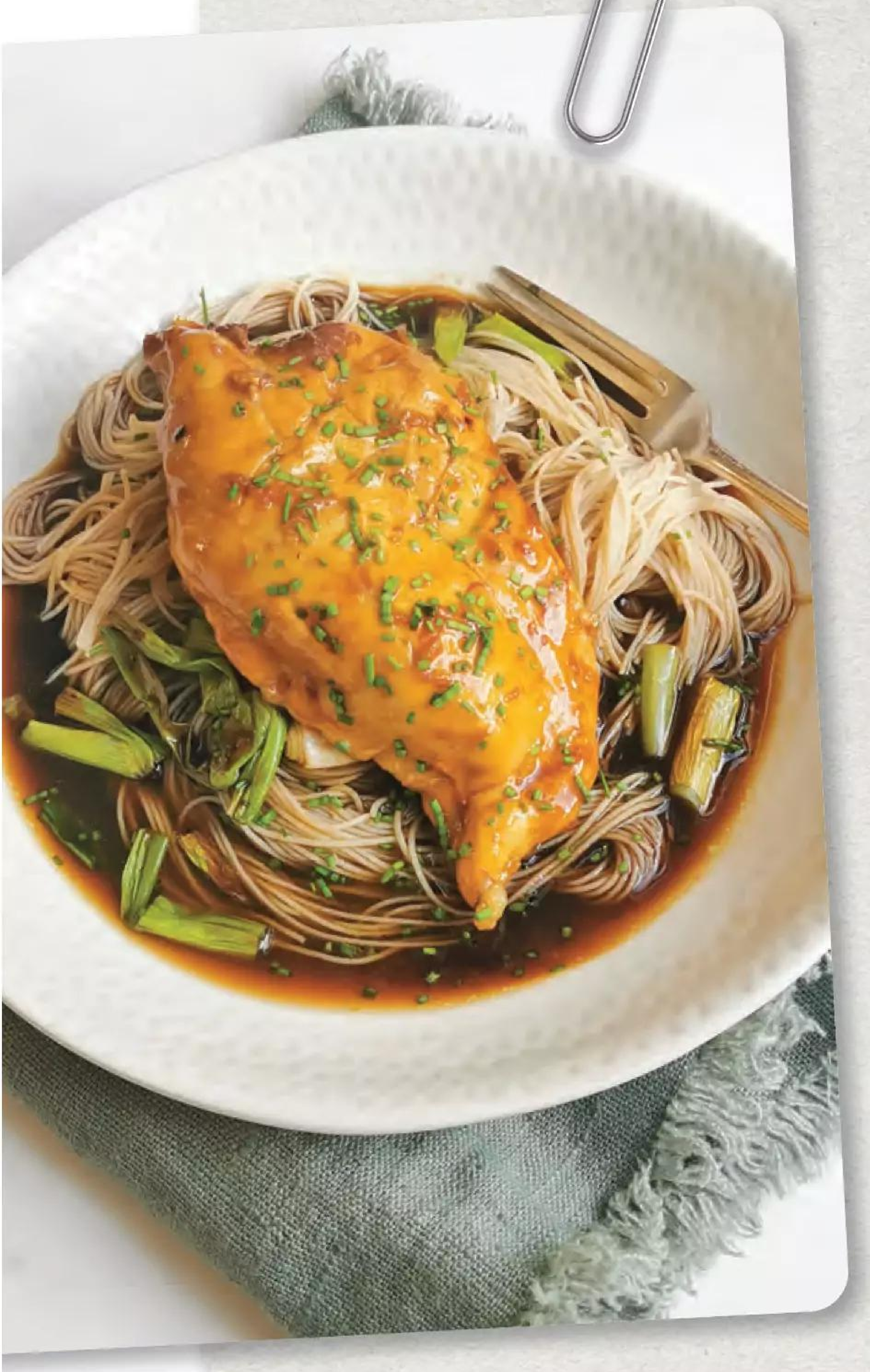
Make it easy

Keep a yoga mat or resistance bands nearby for quick workouts. Take calls while walking, stretch while watching TV, or swap one sedentary habit (scrolling on your phone) for a movement-based one, such as stretching or light bodyweight exercises.

Try this simple movement plan to give structure

Building exercise into your regular routine will make things second-nature

Monday	Go for a 20-minute walk or run
Tuesday	15 minutes of yoga or stretching
Wednesday	Go for a 20-minute walk or run
Thursday	Set an alarm to move every hour
Friday	20 minutes of bodyweight strength exercises
Saturday	Go for a 30-minute walk or run
Sunday	Do some gardening or cleaning



RECIPE OF THE DAY

Tamarind chicken

Chicken is a lean source of protein that will help you to strengthen your muscles as you exercise more

By Fern Green

Serves **2** | Prep **5 mins** | Cook **15-25 mins**

- **2 x 150g chicken breasts**
- **120g (1 cup) tamarind paste**
- **8 tbsp honey**
- **3 tbsp fish sauce**
- **2 tbsp light soy sauce**
- **2 tbsp toasted sesame oil**
- **2 garlic cloves, peeled, grated**
- **a handful of chives, finely chopped**
- **½ tsp salt**
- **4 spring onions (scallions), cut into 5cm (2in) pieces**
- **1 nest of vermicelli rice noodles**

1. Place the noodles in a bowl and pour over boiling water. Leave to rehydrate.
2. Create the sauce by adding the tamarind paste, honey, fish sauce, soy sauce, sesame oil and garlic to a bowl.
3. Score the chicken with a sharp knife on top to allow the flavours to penetrate through.
4. Place each breast on two sheets of kitchen foil, enough to wrap up each piece. Pull the sides of the foil up around the chicken, add the spring onions, then pour half the sauce over each. Seal each parcel firmly, then place in the air fryer to cook for 15 minutes at 200°C/400°F. Alternatively, pop them in a conventional oven for 20-25 minutes at 200°C/Gas Mark 6.
5. Divide the noodles between two bowls, empty the parcels over the noodles, then sprinkle with chives before serving.

Habit tracker

○ **Today I...** Started moving more

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

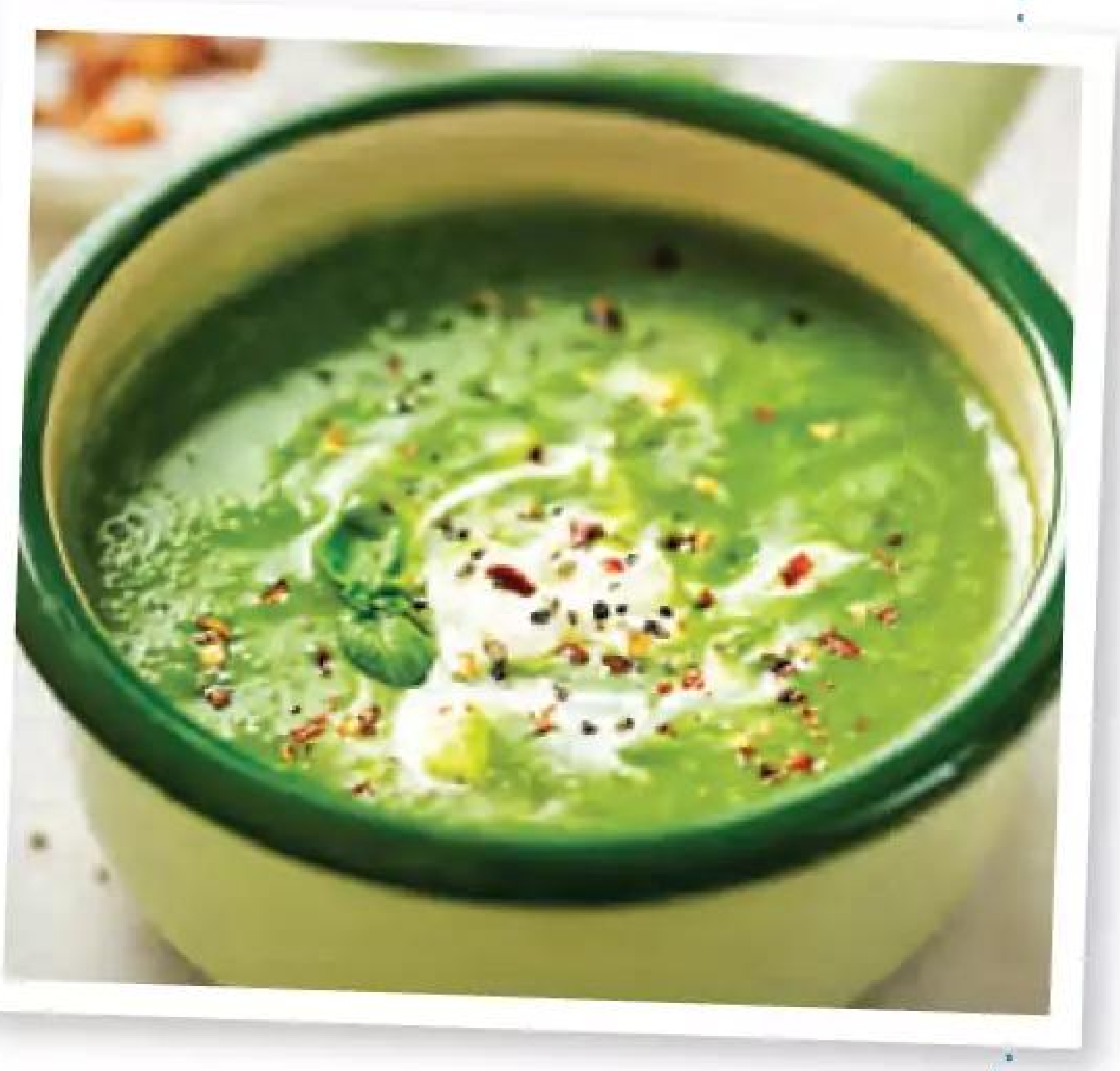
Avocado on whole grain toast with chilli flakes

Lunch

Broccoli and pea soup

Dinner

Tofu stir-fry with ginger and brown rice



DAY 4

Today focus on eating the rainbow

Eat a range of colourful veg – the greater the variety, the more antioxidants and polyphenols

Eating a diverse range of colourful vegetables is one of the simplest ways that you can flood your body with antioxidants, polyphenols, fibre and essential nutrients. Different colours in vegetables indicate unique plant compounds that support various aspects of health. For example, red vegetables like tomatoes contain lycopene, which supports heart health, while orange and yellow vegetables, such as carrots and bell peppers, are rich in beta-carotene, which is essential for eye health and immune function.

Green vegetables, such as spinach, kale and broccoli are packed with folate, magnesium and chlorophyll, which are good for supporting detoxification and inflammation reduction.

Purple and blue vegetables, such as aubergines and red cabbage, contain anthocyanins, which have been linked to improved brain function and reduced oxidative stress. By eating a wide variety of colours, you ensure that your body benefits from a broad spectrum of protective compounds.

Here's how to get started with incorporating more colourful vegetables into your diet

Aim to include at least three different colours of vegetables in each of your meals. Add roasted red peppers and spinach to omelettes, snack on crunchy carrots and cucumber with houmous, or make a vibrant stir-fry with red cabbage, broccoli and mushrooms. Salads can be easily upgraded with shredded beetroot, avocado and radish for a nutrient-dense boost. Frozen vegetables of all different colours are also a great option if fresh ones aren't available.

Make it easy

Pre-chop a mix of vegetables at the start of the week to throw into meals easily. Try making a 'rainbow bowl' with different coloured veggies for a fun and nutritious meal.

How to Eat the rainbow of tasty fruit and veg

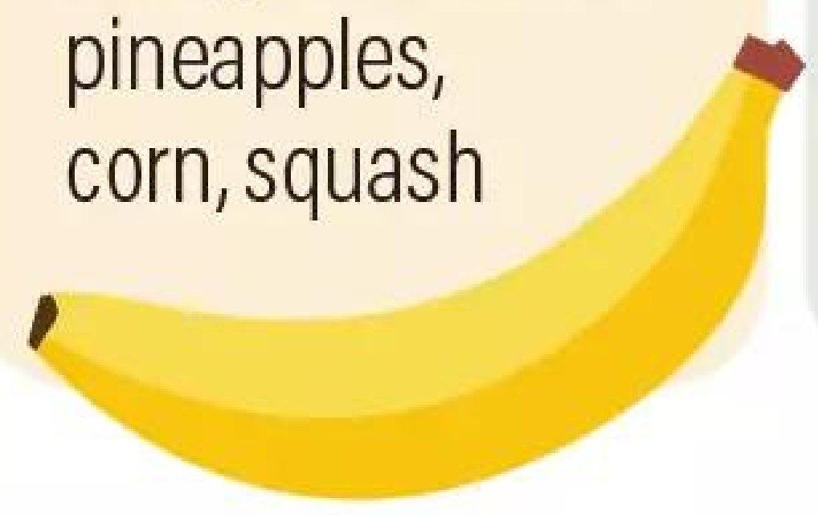
Adding more colour to your plate will give you a wider range of plant goodness

Red

Strawberries, cranberries, red bell pepper, tomatoes

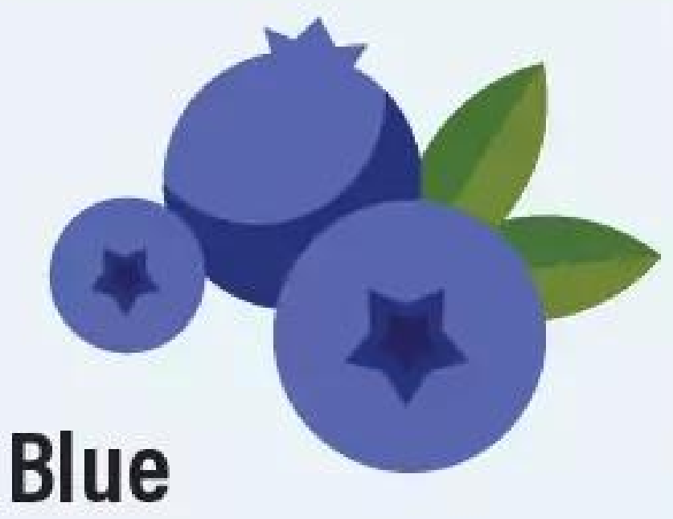
Orange & yellow

Carrots, sweet potatoes, oranges, mango, bananas, pineapples, corn, squash



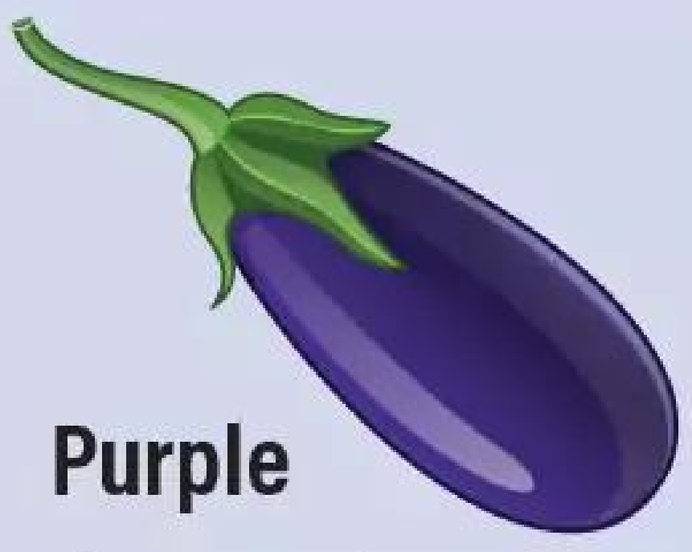
Green

Kiwi, apple, spinach, broccoli



Blue

Blueberries, blackberries

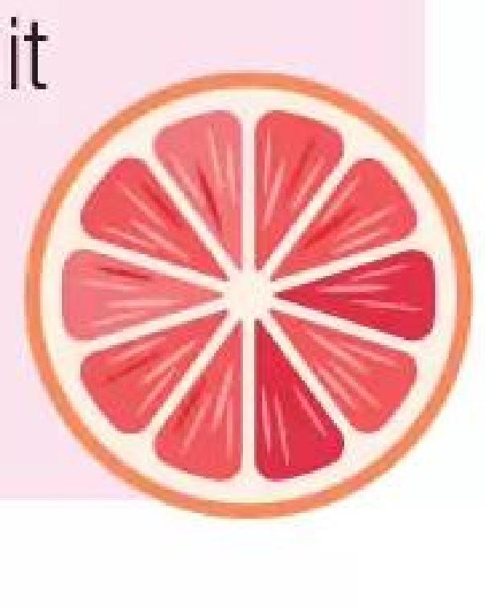


Purple

Grapes, plums, aubergine, cabbage

Pink

Dragon fruit, beetroot, rhubarb, grapefruit



RECIPE OF THE DAY

The glow bowl

There's plenty of colour in this bowl of goodness

By Emily English

Serves **4** | Prep **25 mins** | Cook **15 mins**

Recipe taken from *So Good* by Emily English, published by Seven Dials, available in hardback and ebook, £25.

500g (3⅓ cups) peeled, deseeded butternut squash
1 tbsp za'atar spice mix
1 tbsp olive oil
1 jar of jalapeños
250g (1¼ cups) cooked grain of choice
60g (2 cups) rocket (arugula)
200g (2 cups) feta cheese, crumbled
200g (scant 1 cup) houmous
protein of choice (cooked chicken, tofu, prawns, etc.)
80g (½ cup) pomegranate seeds
salt and pepper
1 lemon, cut into wedges

For the pickle

150ml (⅔ cup) white wine vinegar
100ml (scant ½ cup) water
1 tbsp caster sugar
2 red onions, sliced into rounds

For the dressing

150g (⅔ cup) natural yoghurt
1 tbsp tahini
juice of 1 lemon
1 tsp honey

1 For the pickle, pour the vinegar and water into a pan, add the sugar and bring to a simmer. Remove from the heat and immerse the red onion slices in the liquid. Let them pickle as you continue the prep.

2 Preheat the oven to 230°C/Gas Mark 8 or set an air fryer to 200°C/400°F.

3 Cut the squash into 2cm (¾in) cubes and add to a heatproof bowl. Season with the za'atar spice mix and some salt and coat in the olive oil. Microwave on High for 5 minutes, then spread out on a baking tray and roast in the oven, or the air fryer, for 10 minutes. Remove and set aside.

4 In a bowl, mix the dressing ingredients together with a pinch each of salt and pepper, and set aside.

5 Make a sauce by tipping the entire jar of jalapeños, including the brine, into a blender or food processor. Blend to achieve a chunky consistency. Store any leftovers in the jar in the refrigerator.

6 Microwave the grains to heat through.

7 Divide the rocket between four bowls, to create the base. Divide the grains, feta, squash and houmous between the bowls. Create a well in the houmous using the back of a spoon and add 1 tsp jalapeño sauce to each. Add any protein of choice.

8 Finish with the drained pickled red onions and the pomegranate seeds and serve with the dressing and lemon wedges.

Habit tracker

Today I... Ate at least three different coloured fruit and vegetables (in every meal)

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Avocado on whole grain toast with chilli flakes

Lunch

Lentil and spinach soup

Dinner

Baked cod with roasted vegetables and brown rice

DAY 5

Today focus on using extra-virgin olive oil

Olive oil is key to the Mediterranean diet as it's rich in anti-inflammatory polyphenols

Make it easy

Keep a bottle of high-quality extra-virgin olive oil within reach in your kitchen. Use it as a finishing oil for soups, vegetables, or even drizzle over houmous or grilled fish to enhance both taste and nutrition.

Extra-virgin olive oil (EVOO) is one of the most beneficial fats you can include in your diet, thanks to its high concentration of anti-inflammatory polyphenols and heart-healthy monounsaturated fats. A staple of the Mediterranean diet, EVOO has been extensively studied for its role in reducing inflammation, supporting brain health, and protecting against chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

The polyphenols in extra-virgin olive oil, including oleocanthal and hydroxytyrosol, have been shown to reduce oxidative stress and inflammation by inhibiting pro-inflammatory enzymes in a way similar to ibuprofen. Additionally, its monounsaturated fats help support healthy cholesterol levels and improve insulin sensitivity. Research suggests that consuming EVOO regularly can enhance cognitive function and support gut health by feeding beneficial gut bacteria.

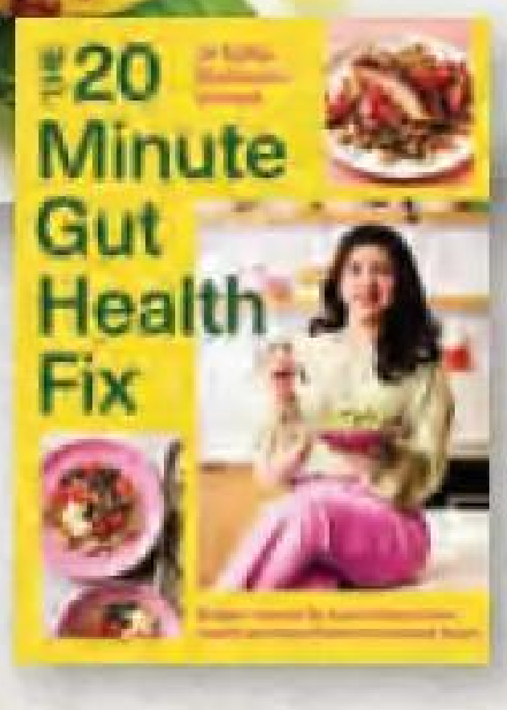
Here's how to get started with extra-virgin olive oil

Use EVOO as your primary cooking fat for low to medium-heat cooking, such as sautéing vegetables or drizzling over roasted dishes. Add it to salads, dips, and homemade dressings for extra flavour and nutritional benefits. When possible, opt for cold-pressed, high-quality EVOO stored in dark glass bottles to preserve its polyphenols. Avoid refined or blended olive oils, as they lack the same health benefits.

Olive oil explained Does extra-virgin matter?

Ever wondered how your oil is classified? Here's a quick breakdown

Olive oil type	What does it mean?
Extra-virgin olive oil	This is the highest-quality, least processed form of olive oil. It's cold-pressed, meaning no heat or chemicals are used, has a low acidity level and is rich in antioxidants and healthy fats.
Virgin olive oil	Virgin olive oil is still cold-pressed, but it has a slightly higher acidity level than extra-virgin. It still has a great flavour though, with plenty of nutrients.
Refined olive oil	You might sometimes see 'refined' olive oil, which has had some impurities removed, normally via chemicals. It has a low acidity level, but lacks the flavour and nutrients of virgin oil.
Regular olive oil	Your standard olive oil is normally a blend of refined oil with a small amount of virgin oil. It still has some healthy fats, but it's not as nutrient-dense as virgin or extra-virgin.



Recipe taken from *The 20-Minute Gut Health Fix* by Dr Saliha Mahmood Ahmed, published by Yellow Kite in hardback, £26.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Citrussy courgette salad

This salad is drizzled with extra-virgin olive oil for an anti-inflammatory boost

By Dr Saliha Mahmood Ahmed

Serves **1** | Prep **20 mins** | Cook **none**

1 courgette, green or yellow
4-6 cos lettuce leaves
100g (generous ½ cup) tinned cannellini beans
2 small oranges or tangerines
2 tbsp hazelnuts
a handful of mint leaves
salt, to taste

For the dressing

1 tsp honey
1 generous tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 tbsp apple cider vinegar

1 Use a potato peeler to slice the courgette into long ribbons and spread them out on a platter. Tear the lettuce leaves and toss them with the courgette ribbons. Scatter the beans over the courgette and lettuce. Peel the oranges, removing as much white pith as possible, then slice them into rounds. Add these to the salad platter.

2 Mix the honey, olive oil, mustard and apple cider vinegar in a small bowl to make a dressing. Pour this over the salad, season with salt to taste and toss everything well to combine. To serve, scatter over the hazelnuts and a few mint leaves.

Habit tracker

Today I... Swapped my oil to extra-virgin olive oil

Do this... MOST DAYS

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Greek yoghurt with berries and nuts

Lunch

Quinoa salad with butternut squash and tahini dressing

Dinner

Turkey meatballs with courgette noodles

DAY 6

Today focus on cooking with spices

Turmeric, ginger, cinnamon and garlic add flavour and extra health benefits to your food

Make it easy

Keep a small selection of anti-inflammatory spices within easy reach in your kitchen. Batch-make golden milk (turmeric latte) or spice blends like a cinnamon-ginger mix for easy additions to meals and drinks.

Spices are more than just flavour enhancers – they are packed with strong anti-inflammatory compounds that support overall health. Many traditional healing systems, such as ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine, have used spices like turmeric, ginger, cinnamon and garlic for centuries to aid digestion, boost immunity and reduce inflammation. Modern research backs up their benefits, showing that these spices contain active compounds that can help combat oxidative stress, support metabolic health, and even reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

Turmeric contains curcumin, a compound with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Studies suggest it may help reduce joint pain, support brain health and improve gut function. Ginger is well known for aiding digestion and reducing nausea, but it also contains gingerols, which have been shown to lower inflammatory markers in the body. Cinnamon helps regulate blood sugar levels and supports insulin sensitivity, while garlic contains allicin, a compound with antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory effects that benefit heart health and immune function.

Here's how to get started with anti-inflammatory spices

Add turmeric to soups, stews, or scrambled eggs and pair it with black pepper to enhance absorption. Stir fresh ginger into tea, smoothies, or stir-fries. Sprinkle cinnamon over porridge, stewed apples, or roasted sweet potatoes for natural sweetness. Use garlic liberally in cooking, whether sautéed in olive oil, blended into dressings, or roasted for a milder flavour.

4 *spices* to boost your health

These spices don't just add a punch of flavour – they also help with inflammation

The spice	The benefit
Turmeric	This golden-orange spice reduces inflammation, aids digestion and may support brain and heart health.
Ginger	This powerful spice is particularly useful for reducing muscle inflammation, as well as boosting your immunity.
Cinnamon	Cinnamon can also help fight infection. It stabilises blood sugar levels and supports heart and brain function.
Garlic	It's thought that garlic reduces inflammation, along with strengthening the immune system.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Kefir smoothie

Start your day with gut-friendly kefir and added turmeric and ginger to combat inflammation

By Yeo Valley (yeovalley.co.uk)

Serves **1** | Prep **5 mins** | Cook **none**

- **200g (1⅓ cups) frozen mango**
- **1 tangerine, peeled**
- **500ml (2 cups) Yeo Valley Organic Drinking Kefir Natural**
- **1 tsp black pepper**
- **1 tsp turmeric**
- **1cm (½in) fresh ginger**
- **1 small banana**

1. Add all the ingredients into a blender and blend until smooth and frothy.
2. Serve immediately and enjoy for a perfect zesty start to the day.

Habit tracker

Today I... Added spice to my meals and/or drinks

Do this... **MOST DAYS**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Greek yoghurt with berries and nuts

Lunch

Broccoli and pea soup

Dinner

Roasted salmon with peppers and baby potatoes

DAY 7

Today focus on eating more fibre

A diverse diet with plenty of fibre helps your gut health by feeding beneficial bacteria

A healthy gut is key to immune health, influencing everything from digestion and immune function to mental health and inflammation. The gut microbiome thrives on a diverse range of fibre-rich foods that help feed beneficial bacteria and promote the production of short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) – compounds that play a crucial role in reducing inflammation, supporting gut barrier integrity, and regulating the immune system. SCFAs, such as butyrate, acetate and propionate, are produced when gut bacteria ferment dietary fibre, providing fuel for colon cells and contributing to a balanced, anti-inflammatory gut environment.

One particularly beneficial food for gut health is stewed apples. Apples are naturally high in pectin, a type of soluble fibre that nourishes gut bacteria. When apples are gently cooked, the pectin is released, making it more bio-available and easier for gut microbes to ferment into SCFAs. Stewed apples are quick to prepare, taking just 10-15 minutes, and can be enjoyed warm or stored for later.

Here's how to get started with gut-friendly foods

It's recommended that we try to consume around 25-30g of fibre every day. Try to include a variety of plant-based fibres, such as lentils, oats, flaxseeds and nuts, to encourage microbial diversity. Eat polyphenol-rich foods like berries, green tea and dark chocolate, which act as fuel for beneficial bacteria in your gut.

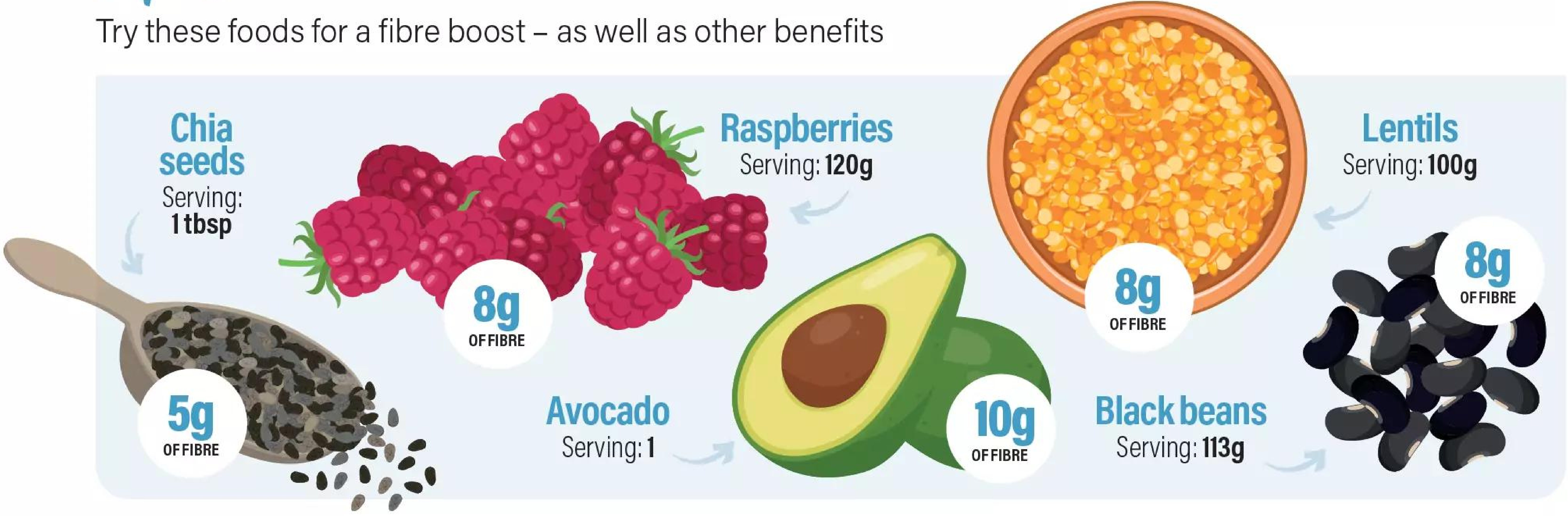
Make stewed apples by simmering chopped apples with a little water and cinnamon until soft, then enjoy on their own, with yoghurt, or on some porridge.

Make it easy

Keep a mix of fibre-rich foods in your diet by adding nuts and seeds to meals, snacking on fruit, and preparing a quick batch of stewed apples each week for an easy gut-friendly boost.

Top 5 fibre-rich foods

Try these foods for a fibre boost – as well as other benefits



RECIPE OF THE DAY

Berry and chia seed breakfast

There's around 16g of fibre in each serving of this tasty dish

By Dr Saliha Mahmood Ahmed

Serves **4** | Prep **10 mins** plus chilling | Cook **none**

2 x 400g tins (3⅓ cups) of coconut milk

400g (2½ cups) frozen mixed summer berries

4 tbsp jumbo oats

2 tbsp flaxseeds (linseeds)

seeds of 2 fat cardamom pods

2 tbsp maple syrup (optional)

100g (¾ cup) chia seeds

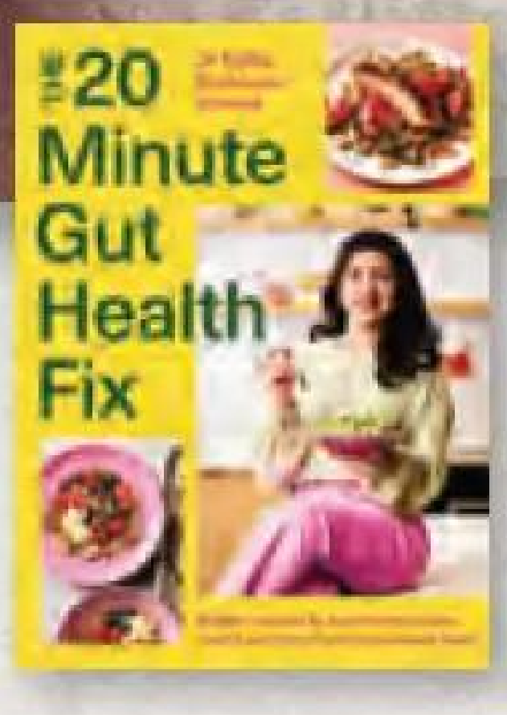
kefir yoghurt or other live yoghurt, to serve (optional)

1 Add the coconut milk, frozen berries, oats, flaxseeds and cardamom seeds to a blender and blitz to a smooth purée. Frozen berries can sometimes be quite tart, so taste the mixture and add the syrup if you think it needs a touch of sweetness.

2 Pour the blended fruit mixture into a large bowl, add the chia seeds and stir well to combine. Refrigerate for a few hours, or overnight.

3 Serve with some kefir or live yoghurt, if you like, and topped with mixed nuts and seeds or extra berries.

Time-saving hack: Use frozen mixed berries rather than trying to buy three or four different types of fresh berry: this will save you time and money. You can use mixed frozen tropical fruit, or any other combination that you like.



The 20 Minute Gut Health Fix

Recipe taken from *The 20-Minute Gut Health Fix* by Dr Saliha Mahmood Ahmed, published by Yellow Kite in hardback, £26.

Habit tracker

Today I... Ate more fibre-rich foods

Do this... EVERY DAY

End of week reflection

The habit I most enjoyed this week was...

My favourite meal this week was...

The habit I think benefited me most was...

My biggest takeaway from this week is...

The habit I struggled with most was...

My new favourite ingredient is...

Overall this week my health has been...

Number of days I moved more:

Amount of water I drank each day:

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Chia pudding with banana

Lunch

Lentil and spinach soup

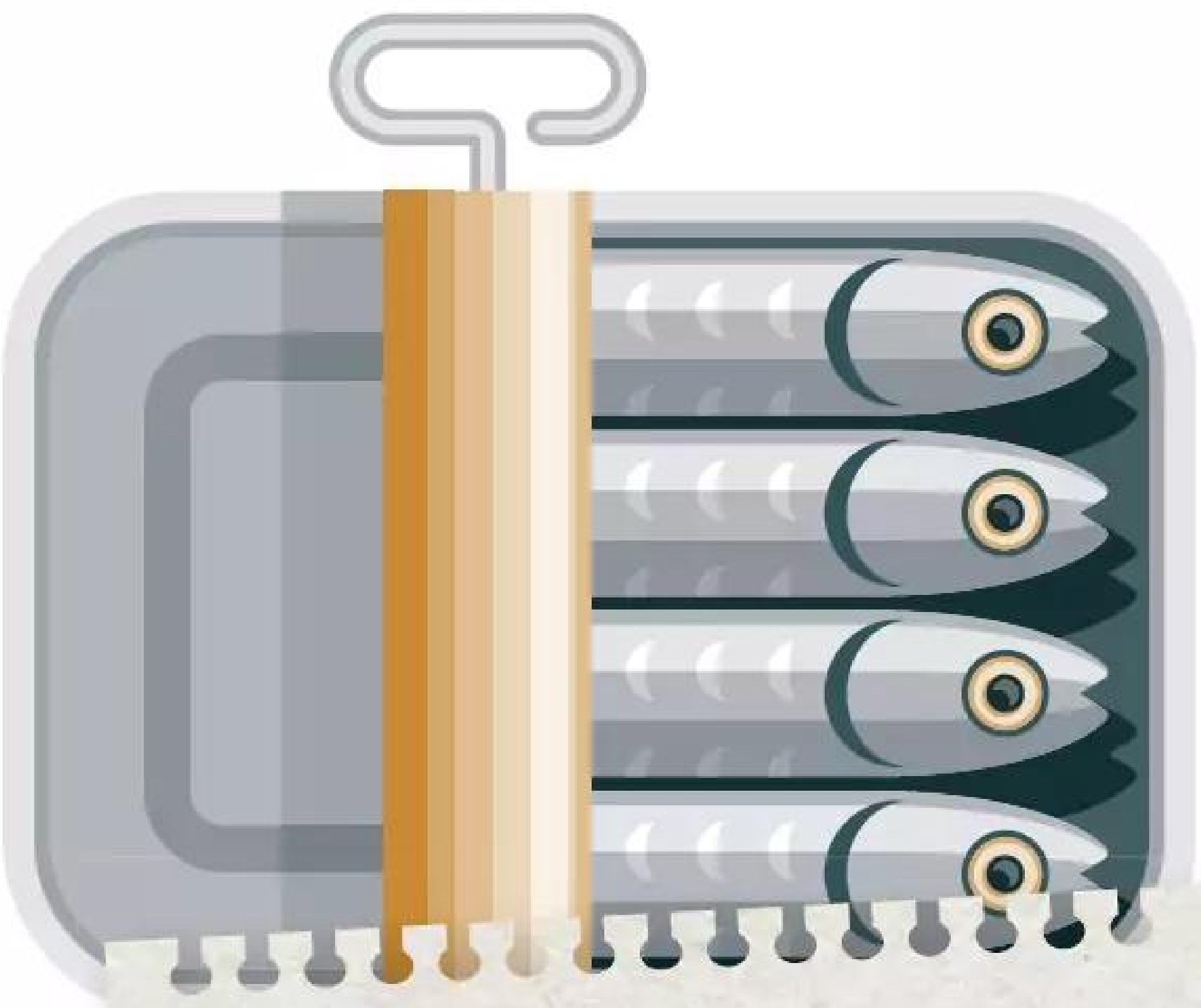
Dinner

Baked sweet potato with beans and smashed avocado

DAY 8

Today focus on prioritising omega-3s

Include oily fish, flaxseeds, chia and walnuts in your diet to help balance inflammation



Make it easy

Keep tinned sardines or mackerel on hand for a quick, nutrient-dense meal. Prep chia pudding in advance for an omega-3-rich breakfast and keep a jar of ground flaxseeds in the fridge to easily sprinkle over meals.

Omega-3 fatty acids are essential fats that play a critical role in reducing inflammation, supporting brain function and promoting heart health. Unlike other fats, omega-3s cannot be produced by the body, so they must be obtained through diet. They are important for balancing the inflammatory response, as modern diets tend to be overly rich in omega-6 fatty acids, which, in excess, can contribute to chronic inflammation. Omega-3s are also essential for cognitive function, mood regulation and joint health, with research linking higher intakes to a lower risk of depression, cognitive decline and heart disease.

There are three main types: EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid), found primarily in marine sources, and ALA (alpha-linolenic acid), found in plant-based foods. EPA and DHA are the most bio-available forms, so they are readily used by the body, whereas ALA must be converted – a process that is not always efficient. This makes it important for plant-based eaters to have high-quality ALA sources and consider supplementation, if necessary.

How to include more omega-3s

Aim for at least three servings of oily fish per week, such as salmon, sardines, mackerel or anchovies. If you're plant-based, focus on flaxseeds, chia seeds, hemp seeds and walnuts. Add ground flaxseeds to porridge, blend chia seeds into smoothies, or sprinkle hemp seeds on salads. For those who struggle to get enough from food alone, a high-quality omega-3 supplement, such as fish oil or algae-based DHA, can be beneficial.

Omega-3s are sensitive to heat, so use extra-virgin olive oil or avocado oil to cook with instead of refined vegetable oils that are high in omega-6s. Include oily fish in meals like traybakes, salads or grain bowls.

4 *no fuss* omega-3 sources

How to pack more omega-3 into your diet using natural ingredients

The source	The serving	What's on the menu
Salmon	4g of omega-3 per 100g serving	Try it poached or steamed with lemon and dill
Walnuts	2.2g of omega-3 per 30g serving	Pop a handful in your salad for added crunch
Chia seeds	2.5g of omega-3 per tbsp	Whizz up with some fruit and milk for a tasty smoothie
Sardines	2.7g of omega-3 per tin	Delicious on some wholegrain toast for breakfast

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Salmon and herb traybake

This salmon dish is packed with omega-3

By Opies (bennettopie.com)

Serves **2** | Prep **15 mins** plus chilling | Cook **15 mins**

50g (3 tbsp) butter, at room temperature

15g (½ cup) parsley, finely chopped

2 salmon fillets

250g (2 cups) asparagus

2 Opies Sliced Lemons

a handful of radishes, halved

100g (⅔ cup) peas

1 courgette (zucchini)

2 tbsp Opies Capers

a few sprigs of fresh dill and mint

salt and pepper, to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Using a fork, mash the butter until soft, then add the parsley and season well. Roll the herby butter in greaseproof paper to create a small sausage shape and freeze for 15 minutes. (Or prepare ahead of time and keep in the fridge until solid).
2. Place the asparagus into a large roasting tray and top with the salmon fillets before scattering the radishes around the sides. Top each fillet with a lemon slice. Remove the herb butter from the freezer and cut into four rounds, then divide between the salmon. Season well, cover with foil and bake in the oven for 10 minutes.
3. Using a peeler, slice the courgette into ribbons.
4. After 10 minutes in the oven, remove the salmon and baste it with the melted butter, then add the peas and courgette ribbons to the tray and return to the oven for a further 5 minutes.
5. Remove from the oven and scatter over the capers, fresh mint and dill. Serve immediately.

Habit tracker

Today I... Ate an ingredient which was rich in omega 3

Do this...
2-3 TIMES A WEEK

How I felt today Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

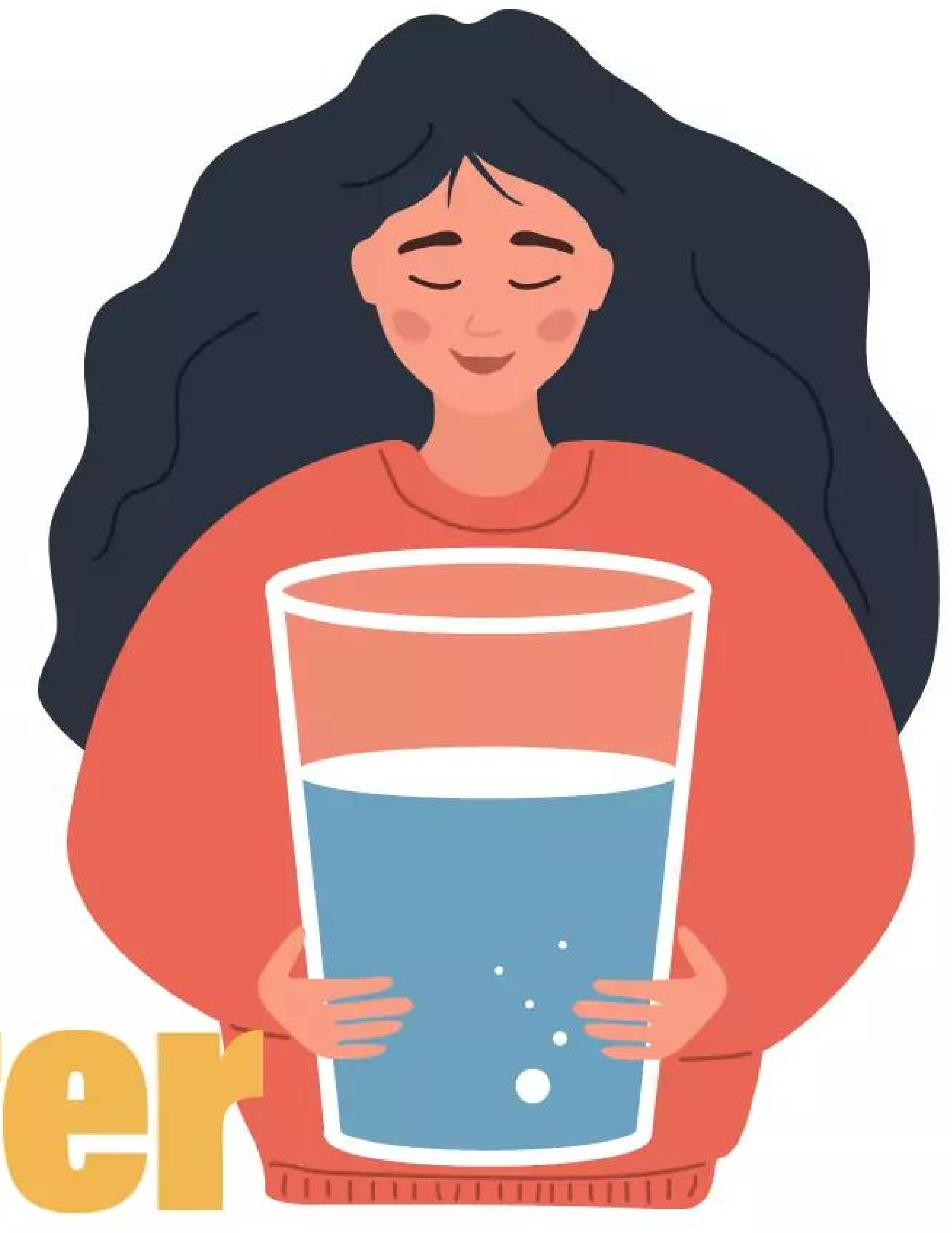
Chia pudding with banana

Lunch

Roasted vegetable and cannellini bean salad

Dinner

Grilled salmon with quinoa, broccoli and a turmeric and ginger dressing



DAY
9

Today focus on drinking more water

Prioritise water, herbal teas and green tea over sugary drinks and excess caffeine

Proper hydration is essential for overall health, digestion and inflammation regulation. Every cell in the body relies on adequate hydration to function optimally, yet many people don't drink enough water throughout the day. Dehydration can lead to fatigue, headaches, poor digestion and even increased inflammation. While pure water is the best choice, electrolytes play a crucial role in hydration by helping the body to maintain its fluid balance, nerve function and muscle contractions.

Electrolytes – such as sodium, potassium, magnesium and calcium – help transport water into cells, making hydration more effective. Without enough electrolytes, drinking plain water alone may not be sufficient to properly hydrate, especially after exercise, during hot weather, or in times of increased stress. Low electrolyte levels can contribute to muscle cramps, dizziness and sluggishness.

Here's how to get started with better hydration

Start your day with a glass of warm water with lemon slices and added electrolytes to replenish minerals lost overnight and to support digestion. During the day, prioritise drinking water and herbal teas over sugary drinks and excessive caffeine, which can deplete hydration. Coconut water, homemade electrolyte drinks, or mineral-rich broths are great options for replenishing electrolytes naturally. Adding a pinch of Celtic salt to water or eating potassium-rich foods like bananas and leafy greens can also help. Aim for at least 2 litres (6-8 glasses) of water every day.

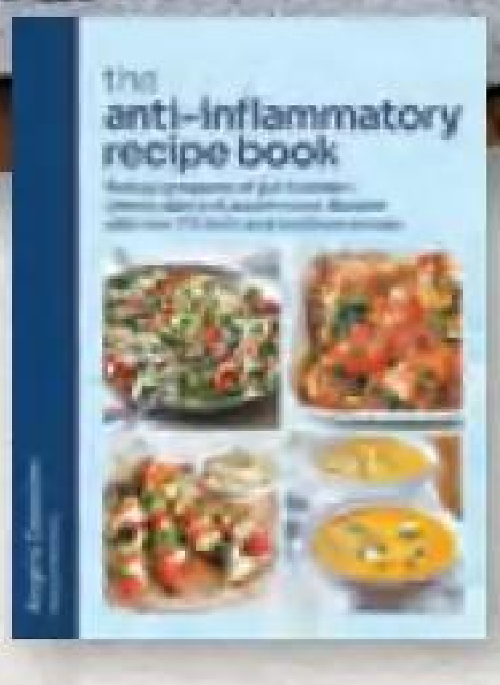
Make it easy

Keep a reusable glass water bottle with you at all times, add natural flavourings like cucumber or mint to water, and set reminders to hydrate regularly. If exercising or sweating a lot, consider an electrolyte supplement or coconut water for extra support.

4 ways to boost your hydration

It's not all about drinking water – here are some surprising ways you can hydrate better

Hydration tip	How it works
Eat water-rich foods	Did you know that cucumber, watermelon, oranges and strawberries all have high water content? Eat more of them!
Up your electrolytes	Drinking electrolyte-rich beverages helps you absorb water more effectively. Try opting for a coconut water.
Don't skip the soup	Liquids in your meals count towards your water intake, too. Having a hearty soup or tasty smoothie all adds up.
Infuse your water	If you struggle to drink plain water, try adding slices of lemon, cucumber and strawberry with a few mint leaves in order to jazz it up and add more flavour.



Recipe taken from *The Anti-inflammatory Recipe Book*, by Angela Dowden, published by Hamlyn, £18.99. Recipe photography by William Shaw.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Butternut and cumin soup

This soup will count towards your daily water intake – and it's spiced with anti-inflammatory cumin seeds

By Angela Dowden

Serves **4** | Prep **10 mins** | Cook **40-45 mins**

- **2 tbsp pumpkin seeds**
- **1kg (6-7 cups) butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and chopped**
- **1½ tbsp olive oil**
- **1 tsp dried chilli flakes**
- **2 tsp cumin seeds**
- **1 onion, chopped**
- **1 garlic clove, chopped**
- **600ml (2½ cups) hot vegetable stock (broth)**
- **2 tbsp natural yoghurt**

1 Heat a non-stick frying pan on medium-low heat and dry-fry the pumpkin seeds for 2-3 minutes, stirring frequently, until slightly golden and toasted. Set aside.

2 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Place the squash in a roasting tin, drizzle with 1 tbsp of the oil and sprinkle with the chilli flakes and cumin seeds. Roast in the oven for 30-35 minutes until tender, tossing occasionally.

3 Heat the remaining oil in a saucepan, add the onion and garlic and fry for 3-4 minutes. Add the squash and stock and simmer for 5 minutes. Using a hand-held blender, blend the soup until smooth, adding more liquid if necessary.

4 Ladle the soup into four bowls and serve topped with dollops of the yoghurt and the toasted pumpkin seeds.

Habit tracker

☐ **Today I...** Consumed 2 litres of water

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

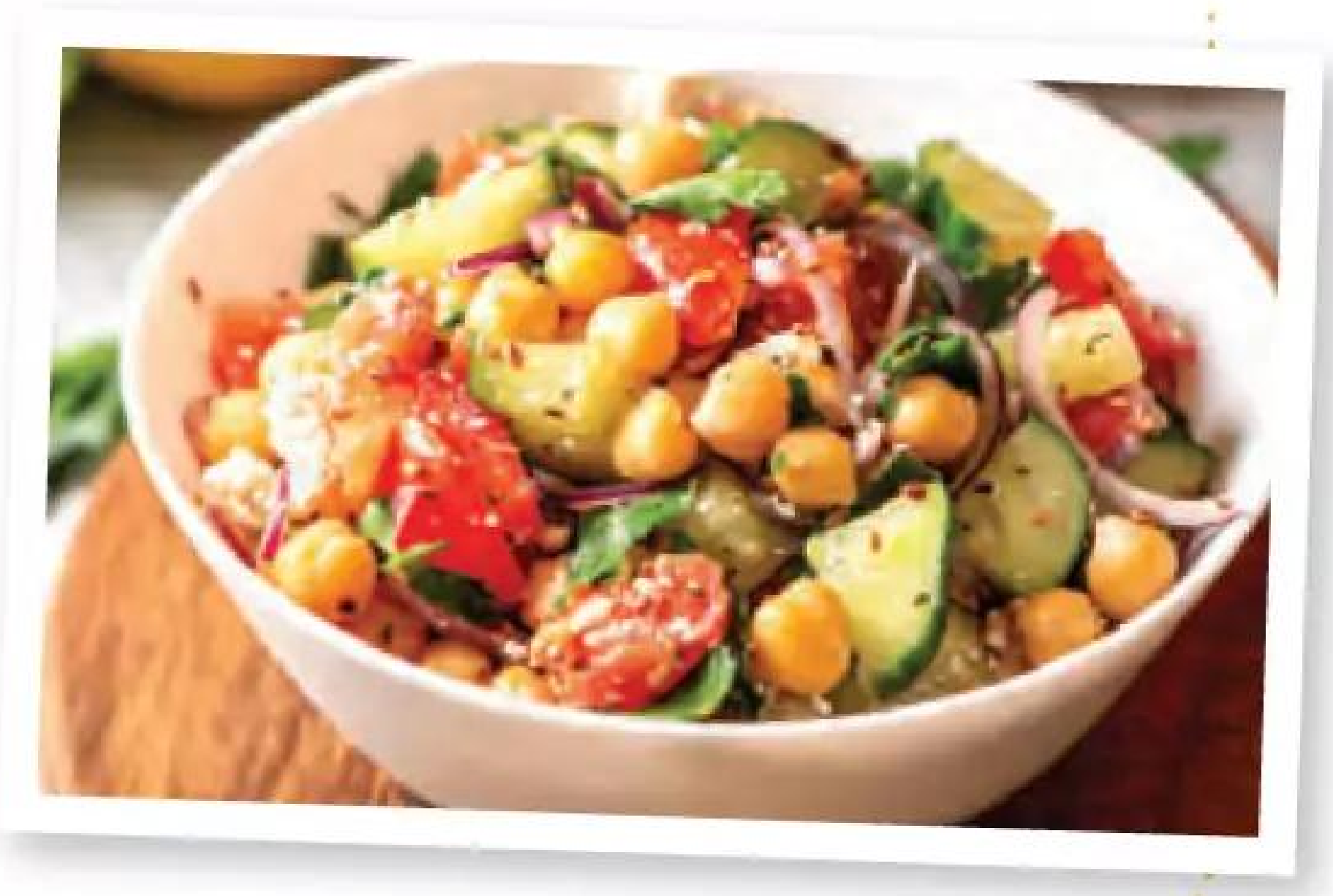
Green smoothie with spinach, mango, flaxseeds and almond butter

Lunch

Roasted chickpea salad with olive oil and spices

Dinner

Baked garlic chicken with sweet potato mash and green beans



DAY 10

Today focus on eating more quality protein

Prioritise fish, poultry, lentils and beans instead of highly processed meats

Protein is essential for muscle repair, immune function and overall metabolic health, but the source of protein matters as much as the amount. Highly processed meats, such as sausages, deli meats and factory-farmed options, often contain inflammatory additives, poor-quality fats and preservatives that can contribute to oxidative stress and chronic inflammation. Instead, prioritising high-quality protein sources provides essential amino acids while also delivering additional nutrients, such as omega-3s, B vitamins and minerals.

Fish, especially wild-caught fish, is rich in anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids. A helpful way to identify high-quality, anti-inflammatory protein sources for fish is by using the SMASH acronym, which stands for Salmon, Mackerel, Anchovies, Sardines and Herring. These oily fish are some of the richest sources of omega-3 fatty acids. Unlike larger fish, which can accumulate heavy metals like mercury, SMASH fish are lower on the food chain, meaning they contain fewer toxins while still being highly nutrient-dense.

Poultry, such as organic or free-range chicken and turkey, provides lean protein without the added nitrates and fillers found in processed meats. For plant-based eaters, lentils, beans, quinoa and tofu are excellent sources of protein, as well as gut-friendly fibre and antioxidants.

Get started with quality proteins

Swap processed meats for wholefood alternatives – choose grilled or baked fish instead of fried. Home-cook poultry rather than using pre-packed deli cuts. Try plant-based proteins, such as chickpeas, black beans and lentils, in curries or soups. If having red meat, opt for grass-fed or organic that has a healthier fat profile and fewer inflammatory compounds.

Make it easy

Keep tinned beans, lentils and frozen fish on hand for quick meals. Batch-cook high-quality protein sources like grilled chicken or marinated tofu, so they're ready to add to salads, wraps, or stir-fries throughout the week.

4 ways to hit your daily protein target

Generally, experts recommend 0.75-1g of protein per kilo of body weight per day

Protein	Serving size
Chicken	100g of cooked chicken breast contains about 30g of protein. A serving is normally around 85g, containing about 24g of protein.
Salmon	Salmon has around 22g of protein per 100g, so a 115g salmon fillet would have about 23g of protein.
Eggs	One large egg contains 6g of protein on average, so having a couple of eggs for breakfast can make a good dent in your daily intake.
Lentils	Cooked lentils are a great plant-based protein source, with around 9g per 100g.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Veggie protein tacos

Switch to plant protein with these delicious quinoa and bean tacos, which contain 12g of protein per serving

Serves **6** | Prep **25 mins** | Cook **30 mins**

For the quinoa chilli

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ½ an onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, puréed
- ½ a red chilli, finely chopped
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ¼ tsp chilli powder
- 100g (½ cup) quinoa
- 300ml (1¼ cups) vegetable stock
- ½ a 400g tin (¾ cup) of chopped tomatoes
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 60g (⅓ cup) sweetcorn
- ½ a 400g tin (¾ cup) of kidney beans, drained
- 6 soft tortillas

For the lime and chive dressing

- 40g (¼ cup) cashews, soaked
- 60ml (¼ cup) water
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- ½ tsp garlic salt
- 1 tbsp chives, chopped

Toppings, to serve

sliced avocado, pickled cabbage, chopped coriander, chopped lettuce, sliced jalapeños, lime juice

1 Heat the olive oil in a saucepan over medium heat, then add the onion, garlic, red chilli, ground cumin, smoked paprika and chilli powder and cook for 3-4 minutes until the onions start to soften. Stir in the quinoa, stock, tomatoes, red pepper, sweetcorn and beans and leave to simmer for 25-30 minutes until the quinoa is cooked and the sauce has thickened.

2 To make the dressing, add the cashews, water, lime juice and garlic salt to a blender and mix until smooth, then add the chopped chives.

3 To serve, top the soft tortillas with chopped lettuce, quinoa chilli and your chosen toppings and drizzle with the lime and chive dressing.

Habit tracker

Today I... Chose a good protein source for every meal

Do this... **4-5 TIMES A WEEK**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Green smoothie with spinach, mango, flaxseeds and almond butter

Lunch

Chicken wrap with spinach

Dinner

Tofu and mushroom miso noodle soup

DAY 11

Today focus on enjoying morning sunlight

Exposure to natural light early in the day helps regulate circadian rhythm and inflammation

Exposing yourself to morning light is an effective way to regulate your circadian rhythm, which controls sleep-wake cycles, hormone production and inflammation. Your circadian rhythm is essentially the body's internal clock, and it relies on environmental cues – especially light – to stay in sync. Morning light helps signal to your brain that it's time to wake, boosting cortisol (in a healthy way) to provide energy for the day, while also supporting serotonin production, a neurotransmitter that later converts to melatonin, the hormone that's responsible for restful sleep.

Sunlight exposure also plays a role in immune function, metabolism and inflammation regulation. Studies show that individuals who get natural light in the morning tend to have lower levels of systemic inflammation and improved mental clarity. If possible, go outside within 30-60 minutes of waking for at least 10-20 minutes without sunglasses, as direct light exposure to the eyes is crucial for regulating circadian rhythms.

Another practice to use is grounding – walking barefoot on natural surfaces like grass, sand or soil. Direct skin contact with the Earth is thought to enable the transfer of electrons, which can help neutralise free radicals and lower inflammation. In winter, when going barefoot outdoors isn't practical, earthing mats are a great alternative, simulating the benefits of natural grounding.

Get started with morning light

Step outside as early as possible after waking up, preferably within an hour. Aim for at least 10 minutes of sunlight exposure without sunglasses. If you can, combine it with grounding by walking barefoot on grass or sand. In colder months, use an earthing mat indoors.

Make it easy

Pair your morning sunlight routine with another habit - drink your coffee or tea outside, take a short walk, or simply stand by an open window. If going outside isn't possible, sit by a window with natural light exposure to your eyes.

4 *Top tips* for getting outside early

How to motivate yourself to get that early morning dose of sunlight

Top tip	Make it work for you
Garden yoga	Take your yoga mat outside into the garden or to your local park instead of practising in your bedroom. If you're worried about funny looks from strangers, don't be – they're just impressed!
Walk your commute	Switch up your normal bus route by hopping off a stop early and walking the rest of the way. Or, if you don't work too far away, try walking all the way there to get some bonus exercise.
Enlist an animal helper	If you have a dog, give them a walk as soon as you wake up. Or speak to a dog-owner friend who might want some company next time they go for a morning wander.
Treat yourself	Have your breakfast in the garden or wander to your local coffee shop for a takeaway cup – whatever floats your boat, it's nice to have an incentive!

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Warm chicken salad

Chicken is a lean source of protein that keeps you feeling full

By Fern Green

Serves **2** | Prep **20 mins** plus marinating | Cook **20 mins**

- **2 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for the dressing**
- **2 skinless chicken breasts**
- **juice of ½ a lemon**
- **1 garlic clove, peeled, crushed**
- **375g (2½ cups) Brussels sprouts, shaved**
- **a handful of bitter leaves, such as radicchio/endive**
- **½ an avocado, pitted, skinned and cut into chunks**
- **½ a cucumber, cut into chunks**
- **2 spring onions (scallions), finely sliced**
- **25g (¼ cup) Parmesan cheese, finely shaved**
- **2 pitted dates, finely chopped**
- **1 tbsp apple cider vinegar**

1 Slice each chicken breasts into five or six pieces, then marinade in a bowl with the lemon juice, garlic and a little olive oil for 15 minutes. Toss the Brussels sprouts in oil, and place in the air fryer. Cook for 5 minutes at 180°C/350°F until crispy. Season, then set aside.

2 Cook the chicken in the air fryer at 180°C/350°F for 10-12 minutes until cooked through and slightly golden.

3 Mix the chicken with the leaves, Brussels, avocado, cucumber, dates and spring onion, then sprinkle over the Parmesan.

4 Create the dressing with three parts olive oil to one part apple cider vinegar and drizzle over the top of the salad.

Habit tracker

○ **Today I...** Started my morning sunlight routine

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Kefir smoothie with berries

Lunch

Roasted vegetable and cannellini bean salad

Dinner

Root vegetable salad with herby dressing

DAY 12

Today focus on eating more plant foods

Eating more plants can add fibre as well as essential vitamins and minerals to your diet

Make it easy

Prep plant-based staples like roasted vegetables, cooked legumes, and whole grains ahead of time so they're ready to add to meals. Experiment with plant-based proteins, such as organic tofu, tempeh, or houmous, and build meals around colourful, nutrient-dense ingredients.

You don't have to go fully plant-based to reap the benefits of eating more plant foods. A diet that's rich in vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole grains provides essential fibre, antioxidants and phytonutrients that can help to reduce inflammation, support gut health and improve metabolic function. Research consistently shows that increasing the number of plant-based foods that you eat can lower the risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers, while also promoting a healthier microbiome.

One key reason that plant foods are so beneficial is their high fibre content, which supports digestion and feeds beneficial gut bacteria, leading to the production of short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) that help regulate immune function and inflammation. Additionally, plants are packed with polyphenols, vitamins and minerals that play a crucial role in cellular repair and reducing oxidative stress.

Here's how to get started with incorporating more plant-focused meals

Start by making small, manageable swaps – replace half of the meat in dishes like curries, stews or tacos with lentils or beans, or bulk up meals with extra vegetables. Try meat-free meals a few times a week, such as a chickpea and spinach curry, a quinoa and roasted vegetable salad, or a hearty lentil soup. Use nuts and seeds to add healthy fats and protein to dishes. Even if you include animal proteins, prioritising a variety of plant foods will provide a more balanced nutrient profile.

4 Simple swaps for meat-free meals

You can still enjoy your favourite meals with these plant-based switches

Instead of...	...try these plant-based alternatives
Ground meat	Lentils: they soak up flavour, are high in protein and have a hearty texture. Try them in a Bolognese.
Beef	Mushrooms: they're great in a burger or stew because of their meaty flavour, and there are so many varieties. Portobello mushrooms are particularly 'beefy'.
Chicken	Tofu: it's a protein-rich substitute with great texture that is absolutely delicious marinated in soy sauce and spices. Try it in a stir fry or curry.
Pulled pork	Jackfruit: this clever fruit has a very similar texture to pulled meat when stewed and shredded. Season it with plenty of herbs and spices and serve in a bun with BBQ flavours.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Moroccan tofu and couscous stew

Tofu makes for a protein-rich meat substitute in this veg-packed stew

Serves **2** | Prep **10 mins** | Cook **25-30 mins**

1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, finely sliced
1 pepper, sliced
1 courgette (zucchini), chopped
280g (1½ cups) extra-firm tofu
2 tbsp ras el hanout
400g tin (1⅔ cups) of chopped tomatoes
480ml (2 cups) vegetable stock (broth)
1 tbsp maple syrup
200g (1¼ cups) giant couscous

1 Heat the oil in a saucepan over a medium-high heat. Add the onion, pepper, courgette and tofu to the oil and cook for 4-5 minutes. Add the ras el hanout and then cook for a further 1-2 minutes.

2 Add the chopped tomatoes, vegetable stock, maple syrup and couscous. Simmer for 15-20 minutes until the sauce has thickened and the couscous is properly cooked through. Season to taste before serving.

Habit tracker

Today I... Ate more plant foods

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

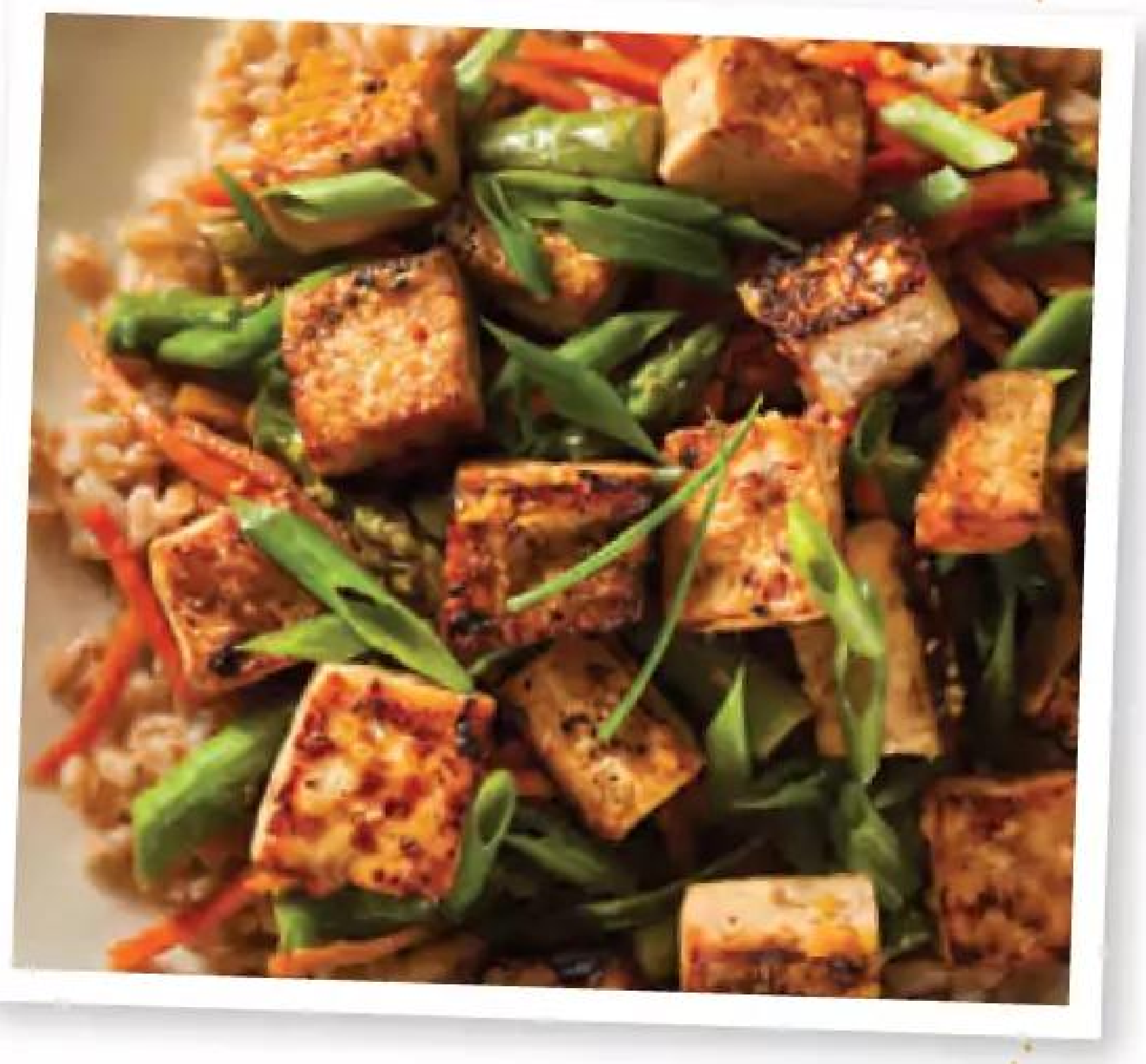
Kefir smoothie with berries

Lunch

Roasted chickpea salad with olive oil and spices

Dinner

Tofu stir-fry with ginger and brown rice



DAY 13

Today focus on eating fermented foods

Sauerkraut, kimchi, miso and kefir help feed gut bacteria and support immune function

Make it easy

Keep a jar of sauerkraut or kimchi in the fridge to add to meals, choose natural kefir or unsweetened yoghurt, and experiment with different fermented foods to find ones that suit your taste and digestion.

Fermented foods are rich in probiotics – beneficial bacteria that help support gut health, digestion and immune function. Foods like sauerkraut, kimchi, miso, kefir and kombucha contain live cultures that promote a diverse microbiome, which plays a key role in reducing inflammation and enhancing nutrient absorption. Maintaining a healthy gut is linked to an improved mood, better digestion and a stronger immune system.

Research suggests that regularly consuming fermented foods can help to regulate inflammatory responses, support metabolic health, and even contribute to mental wellbeing due to the gut-brain connection. However, if you are new to fermented foods in your diet, it's important to introduce them gradually. Some people may experience bloating or mild digestive discomfort when first incorporating probiotic-rich foods, especially if they have underlying gut imbalances.

Here's how to get started with fermented foods

Start with small portions, such as a tablespoon of sauerkraut or a small glass of kefir, and then you can gradually increase the portion size over time. Pair fermented foods with meals rather than consuming them on an empty stomach, to aid digestion.

Try adding kimchi to rice bowls, stirring miso into soups, or mixing kefir into smoothies. If bloating or discomfort occurs, reduce the amount and slowly build up your intake. Natural and Greek yoghurt are fantastic probiotics, so you could try starting with these instead if fermented foods don't work for you.

4 *fermented foods* to add to tonight's dinner

It doesn't need to be complicated – here's how to add in more fermented goodness

Fermented food	How to serve
Kimchi	Pop this tangy Korean cabbage on top of a stir fry or noodle bowl for a flavour kick that also provides you with some gut-friendly probiotics.
Miso	Add a spoonful of miso paste to a soup or sauce for a delicious umami punch.
Fermented veggies	A side of fermented beetroot or carrot adds a crunchy, tangy contrast with a burger or grilled meat.
Kefir	This fermented dairy drink is great to dollop on top of curries and stews for a creamy, cooling effect.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Celeriac miso crisps

Miso adds some gut-healthy flavour to this crispy snack

By Fern Green

Serves **2** | Prep **5 mins** | Cook **10 mins**

¼ of a large celeriac, sliced in half, then sliced thinly

1 tbsp brown miso paste

2 tbsp olive oil

1 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley

1. Mix the miso with olive oil until combined. Stir through the celeriac until each slice has been covered. Using your hands is helpful here.
2. Place in the air fryer and cook at 180°C/350°F for 8 minutes. If you have smaller slices, they may be crispy at this point so can be taken out. Air fry for a further 2 minutes if they are not done, until all the edges are browning and crispy.
3. Serve sprinkled with parsley. These are more chewy than regular crisps, but they still taste absolutely delicious.

Habit tracker

○ **Today I...** Added a fermented ingredient to my meal

Do this... **3 OR 4 TIMES A WEEK**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Porridge with blueberries and flaxseeds

Lunch

Chicken wrap with spinach

Dinner

Salmon and herb traybake

DAY 14

Today focus on using fresh herbs

Basil, parsley, rosemary and coriander are rich in antioxidants and add flavour

Fresh herbs are not only a flavourful addition to your cooking, but they are also packed with antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds. Herbs such as basil, parsley, rosemary and coriander (cilantro) contain polyphenols and essential oils that support immune function and help combat oxidative stress. Regular consumption of fresh herbs has been linked to improved digestion, better circulation and even cognitive benefits. Some, like rosemary, may enhance your memory, while coriander helps detoxify heavy metals from the body.

Studies show that herbs are some of the most nutrient-dense plant foods available, with high levels of vitamins A, C, and K, as well as trace minerals. Unlike dried herbs, fresh herbs contain higher levels of volatile compounds that offer additional anti-inflammatory benefits. Adding these fresh herbs to your meals regularly is an easy way to increase your intake of powerful plant compounds, without having to make drastic dietary changes.

Here's how to get started with incorporating fresh herbs

Chop fresh herbs and mix them into salads, soups and marinades. Make a simple dressing with olive oil, lemon juice and some finely chopped parsley. Blend basil into pesto, sprinkle coriander over curries, or stir rosemary into roasted vegetables. Add fresh mint to water for a refreshing drink, or stir thyme into homemade broth for added depth of flavour. Keeping a few potted herbs in your kitchen makes them easily accessible.

Make it easy

Keep fresh herbs pre-chopped in the fridge or freeze them in olive oil cubes for easy use in cooking. Start with one or two favourites and gradually expand your variety.

4 herbs to boost your health

Fresh herbs are a great way to bring on the flavour – as well as the antioxidants

The herb	Why eat it?
Parsley	Packed with antioxidants as well as vitamin C, which is great for fighting inflammation.
Basil	Contains essential oils that can help to reduce inflammation, as well as antioxidants that reduce oxidative stress.
Rosemary	Rich in polyphenols, which are plant compounds with antioxidant properties that are believed to have anti-inflammatory effects.
Coriander	Another herb that has antioxidant properties – it may also lead to better gut health all round.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Smoky griddled aubergine with salsa verde

Top this aubergine with a delicious, antioxidant-rich salsa verde

Serves **2** | Prep **20 mins** | Cook **10 mins**

2 aubergines (eggplant), halved lengthways

1 tbsp olive oil

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For the salsa verde

a small bunch of fresh parsley, finely chopped

a small bunch of chives, finely chopped

2 tbsp capers, chopped

2 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped

juice and finely grated zest of 1 lemon

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1. Using a sharp knife, make criss-cross cuts in the flesh of each aubergine half. This will help the dressing absorb after cooking.
2. Season the aubergine and drizzle with 1 tbsp olive oil and add salt and pepper. Place in a baking dish, cut side down and transfer to the oven, or place directly on a barbecue. Leave to roast until slightly charred.
3. Make the salsa verde by mixing together all the ingredients and seasoning well.
4. Once cooked, serve the aubergine hot or cold, with some salsa verde spooned over.

Habit tracker

✓ **Today I...** Added fresh herbs to my recipes

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

End of week reflection

The habit I most enjoyed this week was...

My favourite meal this week was...

The habit I think benefited me most was...

My biggest takeaway from this week is...

The habit I struggled with most was...

My new favourite ingredient is...

Overall this week my health has been...

Number of days I moved more:

Amount of water I drank each day:

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Porridge with blueberries and flaxseeds

Lunch

Roasted vegetable and cannellini bean salad

Dinner

Baked cod with roasted vegetables and brown rice

DAY 15

Today focus on getting more sleep

Aim for 7-9 hours to help the body repair itself and to keep inflammation in check

Sleep is one of the most powerful tools for reducing inflammation and supporting overall health. While we sleep, the body undergoes essential repair processes, including muscle recovery, immune system regulation and detoxification. Getting poor or little sleep has been linked to increased inflammatory markers such as C-reactive protein (CRP) and interleukin-6 (IL-6), both of which are associated with chronic diseases like cardiovascular issues, metabolic disorders and autoimmune conditions.

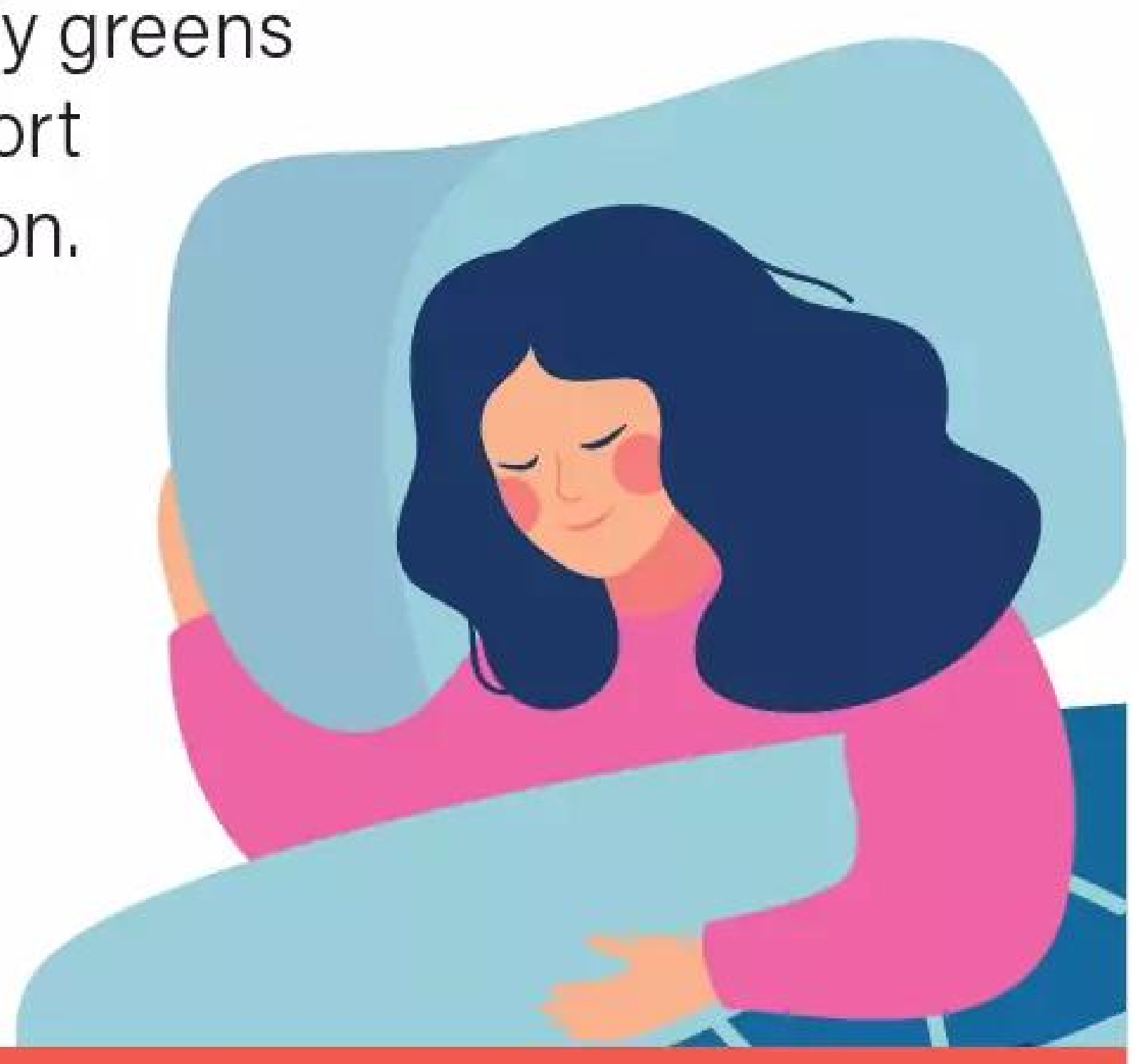
Lack of sleep also affects blood sugar regulation, increases stress hormones like cortisol and disrupts appetite hormones, leading to cravings for sugary or processed foods. Studies show that consistently getting 7-9 hours of quality sleep supports cognitive function, mood stability and even gut health, as your body's microbiome follows its own circadian rhythm.

Here's how to get started with better sleep

Establish a bedtime routine by going to bed and waking up at the same time each day. Reduce exposure to blue light from screens at least an hour before bed, as it suppresses melatonin production; you can also use blue-light-blocking glasses. Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet to create an optimal sleep environment. Try relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, reading, or a warm bath to wind down. If you struggle with sleep, consider magnesium-rich foods like almonds, pumpkin seeds, and leafy greens to support relaxation.

Make it easy

Set an alarm as a reminder to start winding down. Keep a book or journal by your bedside, replace screen time with relaxing music or a podcast and create a calming bedtime ritual that works for you.



4 ways to sleep better

Your body needs time to rest and repair to keep inflammation in check

The method	Why do it?
Create a routine	Going to bed and waking up at the same time each day helps to regulate your circadian rhythm, which in turn leads to better sleep.
Manage light exposure	Avoiding blue light from screens an hour before bed and getting sunlight exposure in the morning will help regulate your body clock.
Avoid caffeine and alcohol	Cutting back on the booze and steering clear of coffee at least six hours before bedtime will help prevent disrupted sleep.
Up your magnesium intake	Magnesium promotes relaxation, making it easier to fall asleep. Eat plenty of spinach, pumpkin seeds and avocados, or try a supplement.

Recipe taken from *So Good* by Emily English, published by Seven Dials, available in hardback and ebook, £25.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Nature's multivitamin

Pumpkin seeds are a source of sleep-promoting magnesium

By Emily English

Serves **4** | Prep **15 mins** | Cook **none**

2 tbsp pumpkin seeds
½ a cucumber
1 red pepper, cored, deseeded and diced
2 tbsp capers
½ a red onion, finely diced
80g (½ cup) pomegranate seeds
a handful of mint leaves
a handful of parsley leaves
400g tin (1⅔ cups) of chickpeas, drained, rinsed
250g (1¼ cups) cooked quinoa
100g (1 cup) feta cheese

For the dressing
1 heaped tsp Dijon mustard
1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
juice of 1 lemon
1 heaped tsp honey

1 In a dry frying pan over medium heat, lightly toast the pumpkin seeds for a few minutes, then season with salt, tip onto a plate and set aside.

2 Dice the cucumber. Remove the seeds to prevent a soggy salad.

3 In a large mixing bowl, combine the cucumber, red pepper, capers, onion, pomegranate seeds, mint, parsley and chickpeas. Fold in the quinoa, crumble in the feta and sprinkle in the pumpkin seeds.

4 In a small bowl, whisk together the mustard, olive oil, lemon juice and honey until well combined, seasoning with salt and pepper.

5 Drizzle the dressing over the salad, tossing gently to coat everything evenly. Serve straight away, or refrigerate for later.

Habit tracker

☐ **Today I...** Slept for at least 7 hours

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Avocado on whole grain toast with chilli flakes

Lunch

Chicken quinoa salad with turmeric dressing

Dinner

Turkey meatballs with courgette noodles

DAY 16

Today focus on anti-inflammatory cooking methods

Grilling and frying can make inflammatory material, so try to steam, bake or slow cook

The way you cook your food can have a significant impact on its nutritional quality and inflammatory potential. Certain high-heat cooking methods, such as grilling, frying and roasting at very high temperatures can produce harmful compounds, such as advanced glycation end products (AGEs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). These compounds have been linked to increased inflammation, oxidative stress and a higher risk of chronic diseases.

While grilling and frying may add flavour, regularly consuming foods that have been cooked at high temperatures can contribute to cellular damage and create imbalances on the gut. Instead, opting for gentler cooking methods, such as steaming, baking at moderate temperatures, poaching and slow cooking. These all help to retain nutrients in the ingredients while minimising the formation of inflammatory by-products.

How to get started with anti-inflammatory cooking methods

Try steaming vegetables to preserve their vitamins and antioxidants, or opt for baking proteins like fish and poultry at moderate temperatures (for example 160-180°C/Gas Mark 3-4).

Slow cooking is an excellent way to break down fibres in meat while preserving nutrients and it also helps retain moisture for tender, flavourful meals. If you love the taste of grilled foods, balance it by first marinating meats in a mix of antioxidant-rich ingredients like lemon juice, garlic and herbs, which can help to reduce the formation of harmful compounds.

Make it easy

Use a slow cooker or pressure cooker to prepare nutrient-dense meals with minimal effort. Batch-cook steamed or roasted vegetables at the start of the week to add to meals easily. Swap frying for baking or poaching to reduce inflammatory compounds without sacrificing flavour.

4 *creative* cooking methods to try

Put your new, healthy cooking methods to the test

Method	Works best for...
Steaming	Broccoli, asparagus, salmon, shellfish, turkey breast, rice, quinoa and dumplings.
Baking	Sweet potatoes, sprouts, carrots, chickpeas, chicken, apples, oats and kale chips.
Slow cooking	White fish, chicken thighs, potatoes, parsnips, tomatoes, mushrooms, cabbage and lentils.
Eating raw	Carrots, bell peppers, broccoli, berries, bananas, oranges, cauliflower and spinach.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Chickpea curry and raw broccoli rice

Raw broccoli rice makes a tasty alternative base for this curry

Serves **4** | Prep **20 mins** | Cook **20 mins**

1 head of broccoli, chopped

For the curry

- **1 tbsp oil**
- **1 onion, diced**
- **1 red chilli, finely chopped**
- **3 garlic cloves, puréed**
- **1 red pepper, diced**
- **1 tbsp ground coriander**
- **1 tbsp ground cumin**
- **1 tsp turmeric**
- **2 tbsp tomato purée**
- **1 vegetable stock cube**
- **2 x 400g tins (3⅓ cups) of chickpeas, drained**
- **400g tin (1⅔ cups) of chopped tomatoes**
- **400g tin (1⅔ cups) of coconut milk**
- **150g (3-5 cups) spinach**
- **1 tbsp sugar**

1. To make the broccoli rice, add the chopped broccoli to a food processor and pulse until it resembles the size of traditional rice.
2. To make the curry, heat the oil in a saucepan over a medium-high heat, then add the onion, red chilli, garlic and red pepper, then cook for 1-2 minutes. Add the coriander, cumin and turmeric, then cook for a further 1-2 minutes.
3. Next add the tomato purée, crumbled stock cube and chickpeas and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add the chopped tomatoes, coconut milk, spinach and sugar and leave to simmer for 10 minutes until the sauce has thickened. Serve with the raw broccoli rice.

Habit tracker

☐ **Today I...** Adapted my cooking method to be more anti-inflammatory

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Avocado on whole grain toast with chilli flakes

Lunch

Broccoli and pea soup

Dinner

Roasted salmon with peppers and baby potatoes

DAY 17

Today focus on deep breathing

A few minutes of slow, controlled breathing can help reduce stress-related inflammation

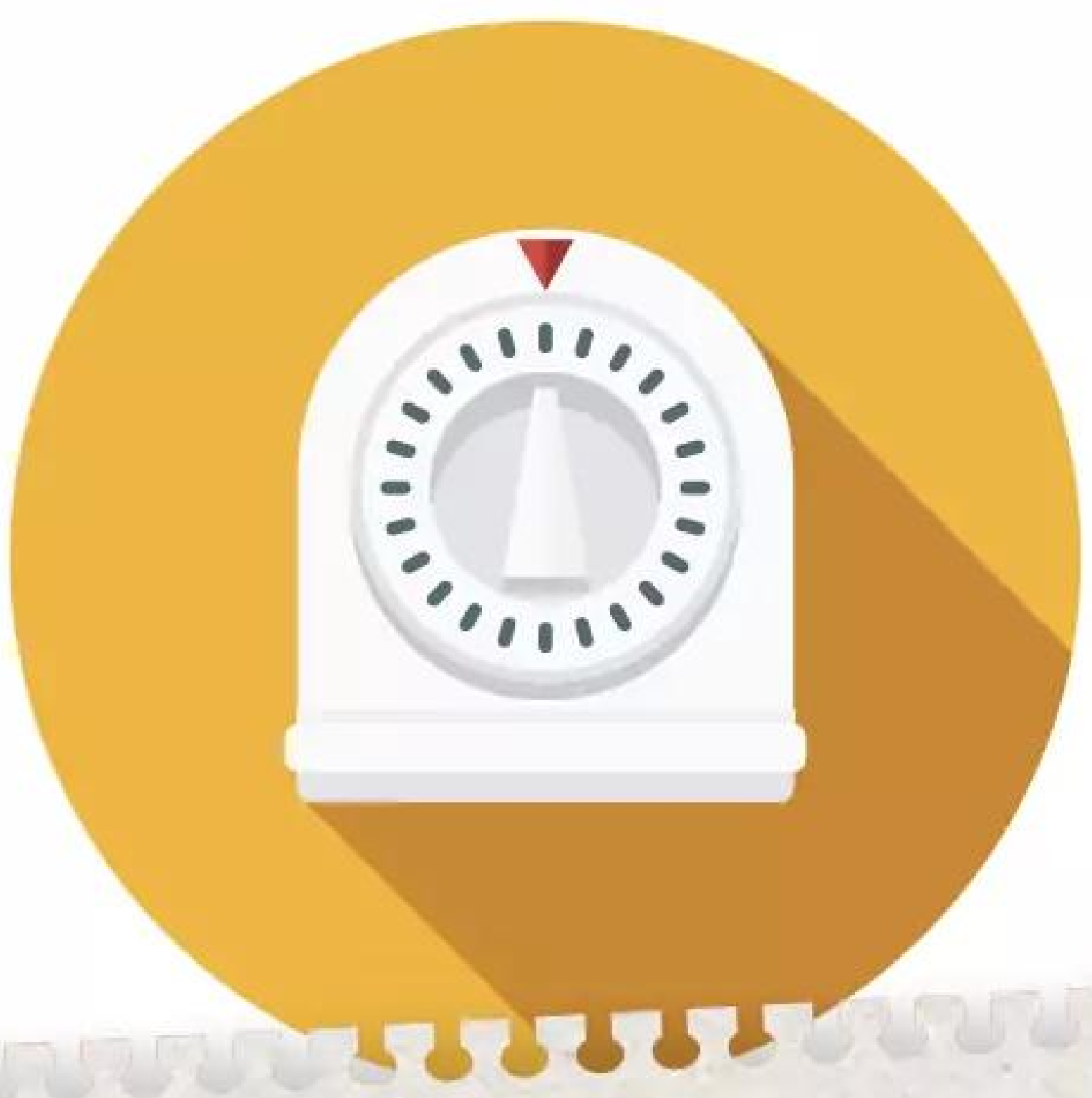
Deep breathing is a simple yet powerful tool for reducing stress and inflammation. When we are stressed, our body activates the sympathetic nervous system (the 'fight or flight' response), leading to increased cortisol levels and heightened inflammation. Deep, controlled breathing helps shift the body into a parasympathetic state (the 'rest and digest' mode), promoting relaxation, lowering heart rate and reducing inflammatory markers. Studies have shown that slow, rhythmic breathing can improve blood oxygenation, support digestion and even enhance immune function.

One of the most effective deep breathing techniques is diaphragmatic breathing, also known as belly breathing. This involves breathing deeply into the abdomen rather than shallowly into the chest. It helps to activate the vagus nerve, which plays a crucial role in calming the nervous system and reducing inflammation.

Here's how to get started with deep breathing

Try the 4-7-8 method: Inhale deeply through your nose for four seconds, hold the breath for seven seconds, and exhale slowly through your mouth for eight seconds. Repeat this for a few minutes to calm the nervous system. You can also practise box breathing – inhale, hold, exhale and hold for four counts each.

Incorporate mini breathing sessions throughout the day – take a few deep breaths before meals to aid digestion, pause for mindful breathing between tasks, or use breathwork to wind down before bed.



Make it easy

Set reminders on your phone to take a one-minute breathing break. Pair deep breathing with daily activities, such as stretching, walking, or transitioning between work tasks.

The expert-backed exercise for reducing stress

Try this tactic the next time that you are feeling overwhelmed

Focus on	Work your way through these stress-reducing steps
5 things you can see	Try to highlight five things that are in your line of sight. These could be a bird outside, a particular tree or a freckle on your hand.
4 things you can hear	Listen carefully. Can you hear any planes over head? Animal noises? Or even your own breathing?
3 things you can touch	Focus on the sensations of three things you can touch, like the material of your clothes. Are they soft? How would you describe them?
2 things you can smell	Close your eyes and really engage with your senses. See if you can identify two different smells around you.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Turkey croque madame

This wholesome sandwich offers a balanced lunch option

By Angela Dowden

Serves **4** | Prep **10 mins** | Cook **8-10 mins**

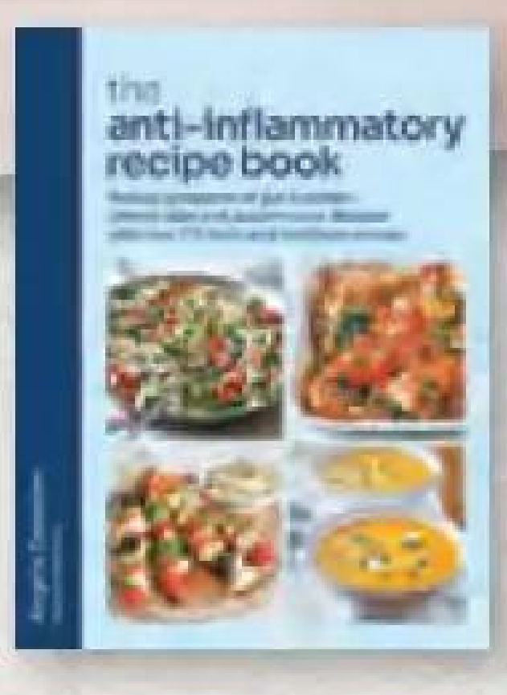
- **8 slices of whole grain bread from a round loaf**
- **3 tbsp whole grain mustard**
- **200g (2 cups) aged Gruyère or reduced-fat mature Cheddar, finely grated**
- **200g (2 cups) cooked turkey, thinly sliced**
- **2 tomatoes, sliced**
- **2 spring onions (scallions), thinly sliced**
- **4 tbsp reduced-fat cream cheese (optional)**
- **1 tbsp distilled vinegar**
- **4 large eggs**
- **100g (2-3 cups) baby leaf spinach**
- **pepper**
- **chopped chives, to garnish**

1 Spread four slices of bread with the mustard. Top with half the Gruyère or Cheddar cheese, the turkey and tomato slices, then scatter with the spring onions. Season with pepper and scatter over the rest of the grated cheese. Spread the cream cheese, if using, over the other two slices of bread and place, cheese side down, on top of the sandwiches.

2 Heat a large, non-stick frying pan on medium heat. Add the sandwiches and cook for 4-5 minutes on each side until crisp and golden. (Or use a panini machine.)

3 Meanwhile, bring a large pan of water to a gentle simmer, add the vinegar and stir with a large spoon to create a swirl. Break two eggs into the water and cook for 3 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and keep warm. Repeat with the remaining eggs.

4 Transfer each sandwich to a plate, scatter over some spinach, top with a poached egg, garnish with chives and serve immediately.



Recipe taken from *The Anti-inflammatory Recipe Book*, by Angela Dowden, published by Hamlyn, £18.99. Recipe photography by William Shaw.

Habit tracker

☑ **Today I...** Practised deep breathing

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Greek yoghurt with berries and nuts

Lunch

Chicken wrap with spinach

Dinner

Black bean chilli on brown rice with smashed avocado

DAY 18

Today focus on eating magnesium-rich foods

Dark leafy greens, nuts, seeds and beans all support inflammatory balance

Make it easy

Keep a mix of nuts and seeds on hand for snacking, add leafy greens to at least one meal per day, and swap processed snacks for magnesium-rich options like pumpkin seeds or dark chocolate.

Magnesium is an essential mineral that plays a vital role in reducing inflammation, supporting muscle and nerve function, regulating blood sugar and promoting relaxation. Often referred to as 'nature's chill pill', magnesium helps regulate cortisol levels, lower stress-related inflammation and support deep sleep. Despite its importance, many people don't get enough magnesium due to depleted soil levels and modern dietary patterns, making it essential to prioritise magnesium-rich foods.

Magnesium also plays a key role in the body's energy production, bone health and heart function, helping to regulate blood pressure and maintain a steady heartbeat. Additionally, it supports the production of short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) in the gut, which help regulate inflammation and maintain a healthy microbiome.

Here's how to get started eating more magnesium-rich foods

Incorporate dark leafy greens like spinach, kale and Swiss chard into meals – blend them into smoothies, sauté them as a side dish, or toss them into salads. Nuts and seeds, such as almonds, pumpkin seeds and flaxseeds, make great snacks or toppings for porridge and yoghurt. You can also use nut and seed spread, which are easier on digestion. Legumes and beans, including lentils and chickpeas, are excellent sources of magnesium and can be added to soups, curries and salads. Dark chocolate (70% cacao content or higher) is also a delicious way to boost your magnesium intake while benefiting from antioxidants.

4 magnesium-rich foods

Add a serving of these great magnesium sources to tonight's menu

Try this	The benefits
Leafy greens	Swiss chard, spinach and kale are all rich in magnesium. 100g of spinach contains 79mg of magnesium – that's 23 per cent of the recommended daily value.
Nuts and seeds	Almonds, cashews, sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds will all give you a magnesium boost. 28g of pumpkin seeds contain 168mg of magnesium, which is 40 per cent of your daily value.
Avocados	One medium avocado contains 58mg of magnesium, which is 17 per cent of your daily value. That's on top of being fibre and potassium rich, as well as full of healthy fats.
Legumes	Black beans, lentils and chickpeas are easy to add to your meals, and contain plenty of magnesium. Black beans contain 120mg per 170g serving, which is 34 per cent of the daily value.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Hot and sour Thai bowl

Chickpeas are a good source of magnesium in this flavour-packed dish

By Emily English

Serves **2** | Prep **30 mins** | Cook **25 mins**

Recipe taken from *So Good* by Emily English, published by Seven Dials, available in hardback and ebook, £25.

300g (2 cups) sweet potato, peeled and cut into small cubes

400g tin (1⅔ cups) of chickpeas, drained, rinsed and dried

2 tsp olive oil

1 tsp cornflour (cornstarch)

1 tsp garlic granules

200g (1⅓ cups) French beans, topped and tailed

1 red onion, thinly sliced

a small handful of coriander (cilantro) leaves, torn

2 large handfuls of cherry tomatoes, halved

3 tbsp roasted salted peanuts

For the dressing

1 heaped tsp honey

juice and finely grated zest of 1 lime

1 tbsp rice vinegar

¼ of a red chilli, deseeded and finely diced

¼ tsp garlic granules

2 tsp toasted sesame oil

2 tbsp fish sauce

a small handful of mint

1 Preheat the oven to 210°C/Gas Mark 6½.

2 Mix together all the dressing ingredients in a bowl and set aside to let the flavours meld.

3 Spread the sweet potato and chickpeas out on a baking tray. Add the oil, cornflour and garlic, with salt and pepper to taste, and mix to coat, then spread out again. Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes until golden, stirring from time to time.

4 Meanwhile, bring a pan of salted water to the boil. Blanch the French beans for 3 minutes, then drain and immediately run them under cold water to halt the cooking process.

5 Remove the sweet potato and chickpeas from the oven and set them aside to cool slightly.

6 In a large mixing bowl, combine the red onion, coriander, blanched French beans, roasted sweet potato and chickpeas, tomatoes and salted peanuts.

7 Pour the dressing over the salad, toss well to combine and serve.

Habit tracker

Today I... Prioritised magnesium-rich ingredients

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Greek yoghurt with berries and nuts

Lunch

Chicken quinoa salad with turmeric dressing

Dinner

Baked garlic chicken with sweet potato mash and green beans

DAY 19

Today focus on bitter foods

Support liver and gallbladder function with bitter foods and bitters before meals

Make it easy

Keep a small bottle of bitters on hand and take a few drops before meals, or simply start meals with a handful of bitter greens. If digestion feels sluggish, sip on artichoke tea or warm water with lemon in the morning to kick-start liver function and bile flow.

Your liver and gallbladder play a crucial role in detoxification, digestion and fat metabolism. The liver filters toxins and produces bile, while the gallbladder stores and releases bile to help break down fats and remove waste. If bile flow is sluggish, toxins can recirculate in the body rather than being eliminated, leading to bloating, poor digestion, hormonal imbalances and increased inflammation.

One of the simplest and most effective ways to stimulate bile production and enhance digestion is by incorporating bitter foods into your recipes and consuming herbal bitters before meals. Bitters activate digestive enzymes, prime the stomach for food and encourage liver function, helping the body efficiently break down fats and absorb nutrients. This is a traditional practice that has been used in many cultures to prevent sluggish digestion, bloating and toxin build-up.

Here's how to incorporate bitter foods and herbal bitters for detoxification

- Try a bitter tonic before meals – herbal tinctures containing artichoke leaf, dandelion root, gentian and milk thistle can be taken 10-15 minutes before eating to stimulate bile flow.
- Eat bitter greens like rocket (arugula), dandelion greens, radicchio, endive and watercress as a small starter or side to a meal.
- Use apple cider vinegar or citrus peel in water before meals to naturally encourage digestive juices.
- Drink artichoke leaf, dandelion root, or milk thistle tea to support liver function and detox pathways.

4 ways to sneak bitter foods into your diet

Not a fan of bitter flavours? Here's how to strike the right balance

Top tip	What's on the menu?
Balance with sweet flavours	Try drizzling honey or maple syrup over bitter greens, or squeezing over citrus juice to balance the flavour. You could add orange slices and a honey dressing to a rocket salad.
Roast to reduce bitterness	Roasting bitter foods will mellow them slightly, as well as giving you license to add other flavours. Drizzle sprouts with oil and chilli flakes and then roast until crispy.
Blend into a smoothie	Adding bitter greens into a smoothie can help sweeten the flavour. Throw a handful of dandelion greens in the blender with mango, banana and coconut milk for a tasty shake.
Pickle or ferment	Pickling bitter foods makes them more palatable, as well as adding gut-friendly probiotics. Add pickled sprouts to a sauerkraut for extra crunch.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Chicken, cauliflower and caper traybake

Capers are naturally very bitter, but they've been pickled for a milder flavour in this recipe

By Opies (bennettopie.com)

Serves **4** | Prep **10 mins** | Cook **30 mins**

4 chicken breasts

1 small head of cauliflower, cut into florets

2 tbsp olive oil

2 tbsp lemon juice

2 garlic cloves, minced

2 tbsp Opies Capers, drained

1 tsp dried thyme

salt and pepper, to taste

lemon wedges, to serve (optional)

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Line a baking tray with parchment paper.

2 Place the chicken breasts and cauliflower florets on the prepared baking tray.

3 In a small bowl, mix together the oil, lemon juice, minced garlic, capers, dried thyme, salt and pepper.

4 Pour the olive oil mixture over the chicken and cauliflower. Use your hands to massage the mixture into the chicken and cauliflower, ensuring they are well coated.

5 Arrange the chicken breasts and cauli florets in a single layer on the baking tray.

6 Bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through and the cauli is tender and golden brown.

7 Once cooked, remove the tray from the oven and let it cool slightly before serving.

Habit tracker

☑ **Today I...** Incorporated bitter food into my routine

Do this... **3-4 DAYS A WEEK**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Chia pudding with banana

Lunch

Broccoli and pea soup

Dinner

Tofu and chickpea stew with chilli and coriander

DAY 20

Today focus on reducing stress

Whether it's mindfulness, journalling or hobbies, an outlet helps lower inflammation

Chronic stress is one of the big drivers of inflammation, affecting everything from immune function to digestion and sleep. When we experience prolonged stress, the body produces higher levels of cortisol, a stress hormone that, when elevated for too long, can increase inflammatory markers, disrupt blood sugar regulation and contribute to gut imbalances. One of the most effective ways to counteract this stress response is by stimulating the vagus nerve, which plays a key role in regulating the parasympathetic nervous system (the 'rest and digest' state).

Vagal tone refers to the strength and efficiency of the vagus nerve's activity. A higher vagal tone is associated with better emotional resilience, improved digestion, reduced inflammation and a lower heart rate. Activities like deep breathing, singing, humming and gargling can activate the vagus nerve, helping to calm the nervous system and lower cortisol levels. Engaging in activities that promote relaxation and emotional balance, such as mindfulness, journalling, or creative hobbies, can further enhance vagal tone and support overall stress management.

Here's how to get started with stress management

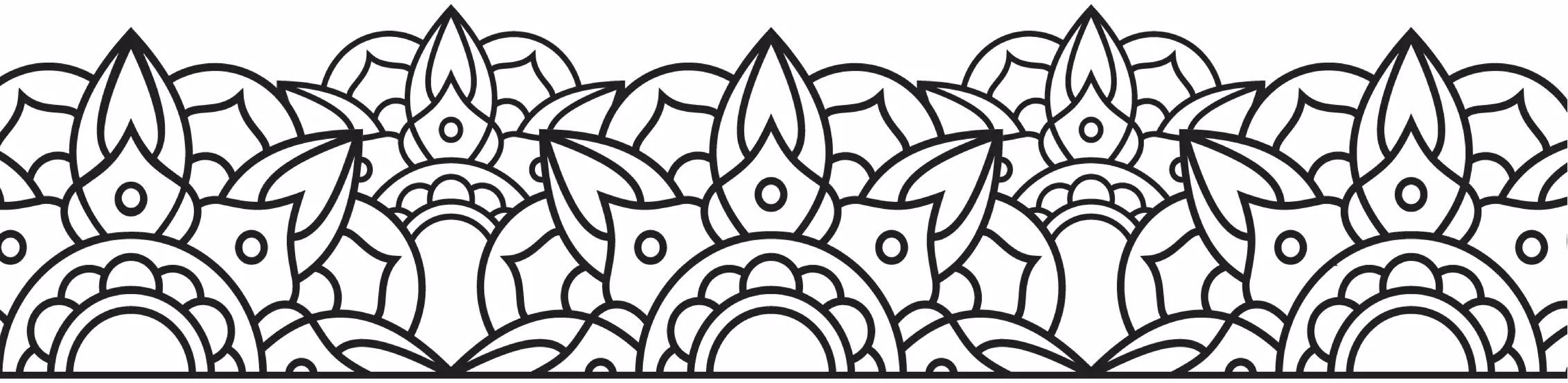
Try setting aside just 5-10 minutes a day for mindfulness, whether it's deep breathing, meditation, or simply sitting quietly without distractions. Singing or humming along to music can be a fun way to stimulate the vagus nerve. Keep a journal to process emotions or write down things you're grateful for – this can help shift the nervous system into a relaxed state. If you enjoy creative hobbies like painting, writing or knitting, make time for them regularly.

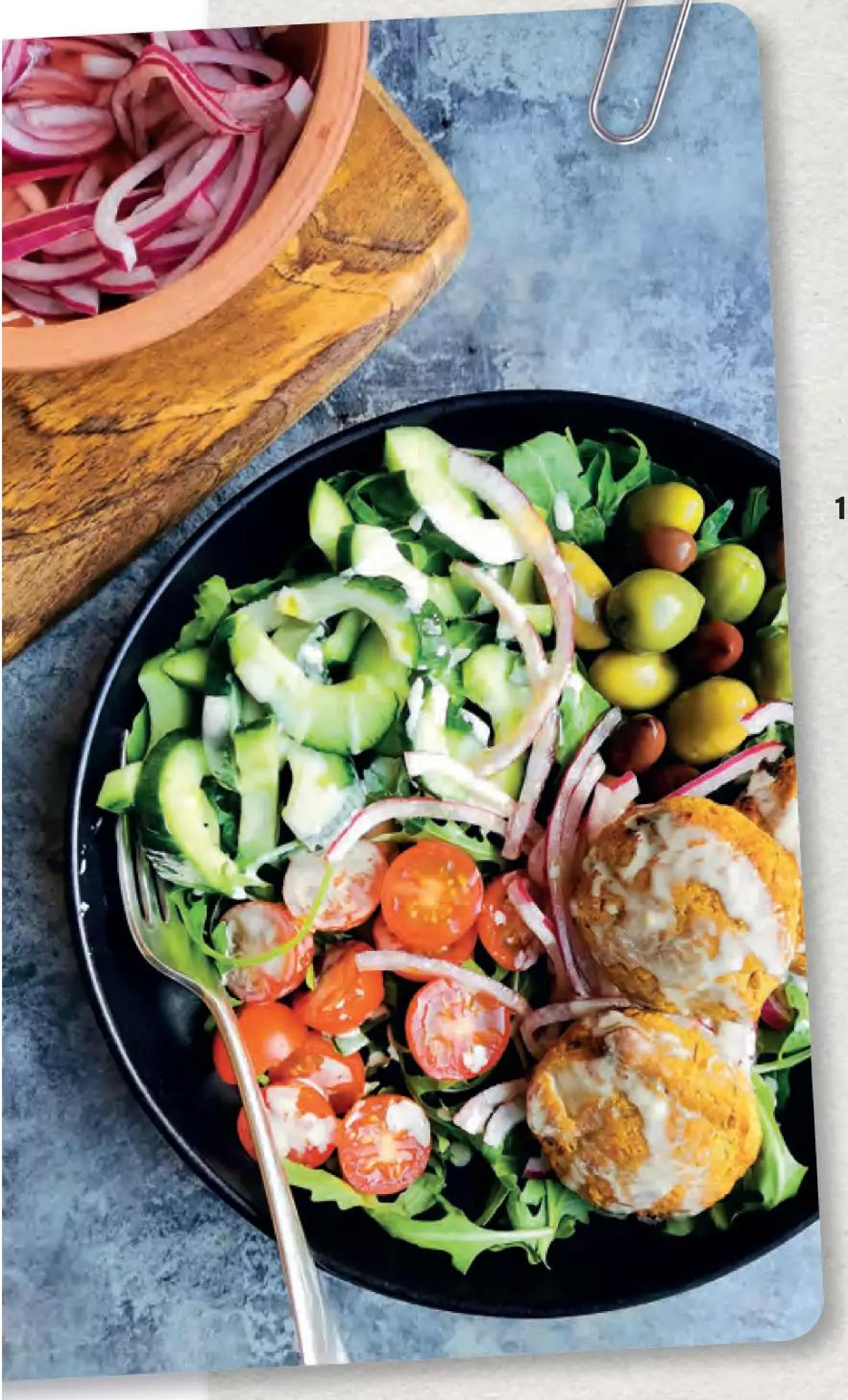
Make it easy

Start small – hum your favourite song while cooking, take a few deep breaths before meals, or splash cold water on your face (another vagus nerve stimulator) in the morning. The key is to incorporate stress-reducing habits into your daily routine in a way that feels natural and enjoyable.

Ease your mind with some colour therapy

Take a few minutes to colour in this design and check in with your stress levels afterwards





RECIPE OF THE DAY

Falafel salad with quick red onion pickle

This quick, colourful salad is full of Mediterranean goodness

By Fern Green

Serves **2-4** | Prep **15 mins** | Cook **14 mins**

1 tin of chickpeas, rinsed and drained
1 garlic clove, peeled
1 shallot, peeled and chopped
1½ tbsp plain (all-purpose) flour
1 tbsp sesame seeds
1 tsp ground cumin
2 handfuls of rocket (arugula)
6 cherry tomatoes, sliced
¼ cucumber, seeds removed, sliced
2 tbsp olives
½ a red onion, peeled and sliced
3 tbsp rice vinegar
1 tbsp honey
olive oil spray

For the tahini dressing
3 tbsp tahini
1 tbsp natural yoghurt
juice of ½ a lemon

1. Place the chickpeas, garlic, shallots, rocket, flour, seeds and cumin into a food processor and pulse until the mixture comes together. Shape into tbsp-size discs, about 2cm (¾in) thick. Repeat until the mixture is used, making 10-12 discs.
2. Place the discs in the air fryer and spray with oil. Bake at 180°C/350°F for 8 minutes, flip, then cook for a further 6 minutes until golden and crispy.
3. Put the onion in a bowl, add the vinegar and honey and stir. Set aside for a few minutes.
4. Whisk the dressing ingredients together with 2 tbsp warm water.
5. Assemble the salad ingredients in a bowl. Add a few spoonfuls of pickled onion, lay the falafel on top and drizzle with the dressing.

Habit tracker

☐ **Today I...** Practised a stress-reducing technique

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Chia pudding with banana

Lunch

Chicken wrap with spinach

Dinner

Grilled salmon with quinoa, broccoli and a turmeric and ginger dressing

DAY 21

Today focus on laughing more

Laughter reduces stress hormones and inflammation, so seek out moments of joy

Make it easy

Schedule time for activities that make you laugh, whether it's watching a funny film, chatting with a friend, or reading something humorous. Try to surround yourself with light-hearted moments and embrace the benefits of laughter daily.

Laughter is one of the most natural and enjoyable ways to reduce stress, lower inflammation and improve overall health. When we laugh, the body releases endorphins that act as natural painkillers and mood boosters. At the same time, laughter decreases the production of cortisol and adrenaline, two stress hormones that, when chronically elevated, can contribute to inflammation, digestive issues and weakened immune function. Studies show that even anticipating laughter can lower stress hormones, highlighting the profound impact of joy on the body.

Beyond stress reduction, laughter also supports heart health, immune function and pain management. It stimulates circulation, increases oxygen intake and promotes the release of nitric oxide, a compound that helps relax blood vessels and improve blood flow. Additionally, social laughter strengthens connections, improving emotional resilience and creating a positive feedback loop of wellbeing.

Here's how to get started with more laughter in your life

Seek out moments of joy daily – watch a funny show, listen to a comedy podcast, or spend time with people who can make you laugh. Engage in playful activities, whether it's dancing, playing games, or even watching silly animal videos on the internet. Laughter yoga, which combines intentional laughter with breathing exercises, has been found to significantly lower stress and boost mood. Even if the laughter doesn't come naturally at first, forcing a smile or laughing out loud can still trigger the positive physiological responses.

Humour us with this one

If laughter is the best medicine, this might be a tough pill to swallow...

Doctor: "Getting enough sleep is key to reducing inflammation."
Me: "So, you're saying naps are basically medicine?"
Doctor: "Not exactly..."
Me: "Too late. I already wrote myself a prescription."

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Root veg salad with herby dressing and pumpkin seeds

This dressing packs a punch, as well as providing the antioxidants to fight inflammation

Serves **2** | Prep **15 mins** | Cook **13 mins**

1 carrot, peeled, cut into batons

½ a medium sweet potato, peeled and cut into batons

1 medium parsnip, peeled and cut lengthways into batons

1 medium beetroot, cut into large batons

2 handfuls of spinach

150ml (⅔ cup) natural yoghurt

1 garlic clove, peeled

1 tbsp tahini

½ a squeeze of lemon juice

1 tbsp chopped parsley

1 tbsp pumpkin seeds

2 tbsp olive oil

1 Place the cut vegetables in a bowl and drizzle with 1 tbsp olive oil. Season and place as much as you can into the air fryer tray. You may have to repeat this process depending on how big your air fryer is.

2 Bake at 180°C/350°F in the air fryer for 8 minutes, then flip over. You may find some carrots will already be cooked at this stage. If so, remove from the fryer.

3 Bake the root veg for a further 4 minutes until everything is cooked through and slightly crispy on the outside. Remove the veg to a serving bowl.

4 Place the pumpkin seeds in the air fryer tray or basket tray and cook for 1 minute.

5 Place the spinach, yoghurt, garlic, tahini, lemon juice, parsley and olive oil in a blender and blitz until smooth.

6 Drizzle the spinach dressing over the vegetables and top with a sprinkling of pumpkin seeds.

Habit tracker

✓ **Today I...** Found something to make me really laugh

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

End of week reflection

The habit I most enjoyed this week was...	**My favourite meal this week was...**	
The habit I think benefited me most was...	**My biggest takeaway from this week is...**	
The habit I struggled with most was...	**My new favourite ingredient is...**	
Overall this week my health has been...	**Number of days I moved more:**	**Amount of water I drank each day:**

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Green smoothie with spinach, mango, flaxseeds and almond butter

Lunch

Chicken quinoa salad with turmeric dressing

Dinner

Steamed turkey breast with wild rice and steamed veg

DAY 22

Today focus on having an Epsom salt bath

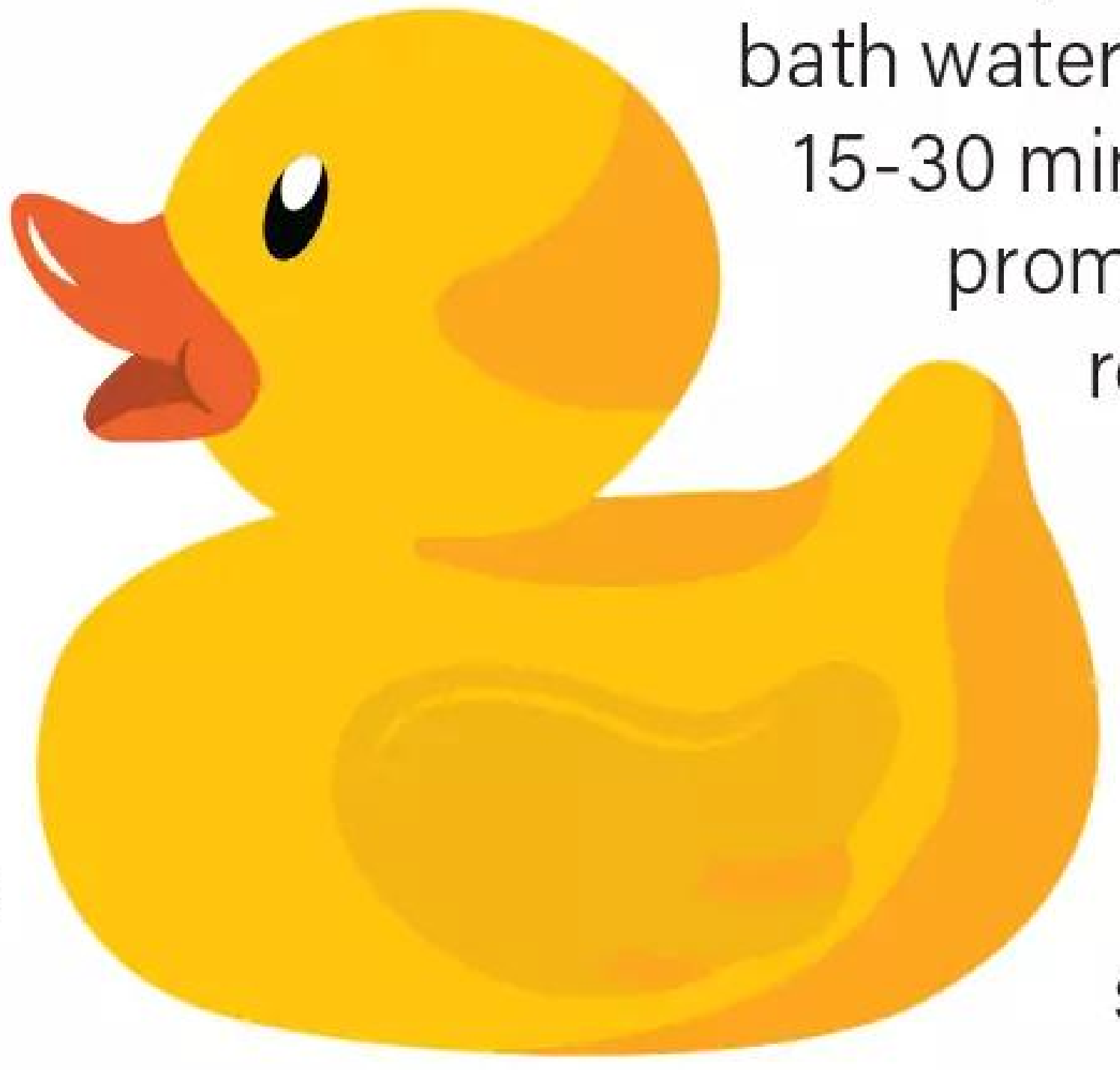
Magnesium helps with muscle relaxation and stress reduction, as well as good sleep

Taking an Epsom salt bath is a simple yet effective way to relax muscles, reduce stress and support your health. Epsom salts are made of magnesium sulfate, a mineral that plays a crucial role in muscle function, nerve signalling and stress regulation. Magnesium is known as the 'relaxation mineral', helping to ease tension, promote restful sleep and lower inflammation. Since many people are deficient in magnesium due to modern diets and stress, an Epsom salt bath can be a great way to replenish your levels through skin absorption (transdermal magnesium therapy).

Soaking in a warm bath with Epsom salts can help reduce muscle soreness, ease joint stiffness and calm the nervous system. The warmth of the water also enhances circulation and detoxification, encouraging the body to relax and reset. Studies suggest that magnesium absorption through the skin may be beneficial for reducing cortisol (the stress hormone) and improving sleep quality.

Here's how to get started with Epsom salt baths

Add 1-2 cups of Epsom salts to warm bath water and then soak in it for 15-30 minutes, ideally before bed to promote deep sleep. For extra relaxation, add essential oils like lavender or chamomile, which further support stress relief. If you don't have time for a full bath, try an Epsom salt foot soak for similar benefits.



Make it easy

Keep a bag of Epsom salts in the bathroom as a reminder to take a bath when needed. Set aside time each week for a relaxing soak to unwind, reduce muscle tension and promote better sleep.

4 ways to soak up magnesium – without a bath!

If you don't have a tub, here are some other ways to get a magnesium boost

Method	Feel the benefit
Supplements	Magnesium glycinate promotes muscle relaxation and good sleep, and you can usually find it in the form of a tablet from your local health shop.
Oils and sprays	If you would rather take on your magnesium through the skin (transdermal absorption) then you can also find oils and sprays in wellness shops.
Mineral-rich water	Check the mineral content of some sparkling waters – they will often contain high levels of magnesium. Alternatively, you can buy magnesium drops and add them to your water.
Eat chocolate	Good news! Dark chocolate contains magnesium. Go for a 70 per cent (or higher) cacao bar, so you don't counteract the effects with too much sugar.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Dark chocolate and olive oil mousse

Dark chocolate is a great way to get more magnesium into your diet

Serves **4** | Prep **15 mins** | Cook **none**

120ml (½ cup) aquafaba (liquid from a tin of chickpeas)

200g (1⅓ cups) dark chocolate, melted

150g (¾ cup) silken tofu

2 tbsp olive oil

1 tbsp maple syrup

a pinch of sea salt

1. Using an electric whisk, whisk the aquafaba to stiff peaks.
2. Add the melted chocolate, tofu, oil and syrup to a blender and blend until smooth.
3. Fold the aquafaba into the chocolate, mixing carefully until fully incorporated, then sprinkle with some sea salt to serve.

Habit tracker

☐ **Today I...** Had an Epsom salt bath/foot soak

Do this... **ONCE A WEEK**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Smoothie with spinach, mango, flaxseeds and almond butter

Lunch

Lentil and spinach soup

Dinner

Baked garlic chicken with sweet potato mash and broccoli

DAY 23

Today focus on limiting ultra processed foods

Avoiding ready meals, packaged snacks and processed meats helps lower inflammation

Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) are a major contributor to chronic inflammation, metabolic disorders and gut health issues. These foods are heavily altered from their natural state and often contain refined vegetable oils, emulsifiers, artificial preservatives, stabilisers and high levels of sugar and salt. Many are designed to be hyper-palatable, stimulating the brain's reward centres, making them difficult to resist and easier to over-consume. Over time, this can lead to insulin resistance, blood sugar imbalance and increased cravings, making it harder to maintain a nutrient-dense, whole-food diet.

Research links UPFs to inflammatory markers, particularly C-reactive protein (CRP) and interleukin-6 (IL-6) that are associated with chronic diseases, such as obesity, cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. UPFs also negatively impact gut bacteria, disrupting the balance of beneficial microbes that support immune function, digestion and mental health. Cutting down on UPFs and replacing them with whole, minimally-processed foods can help reduce inflammation, support metabolic health and improve overall wellbeing.

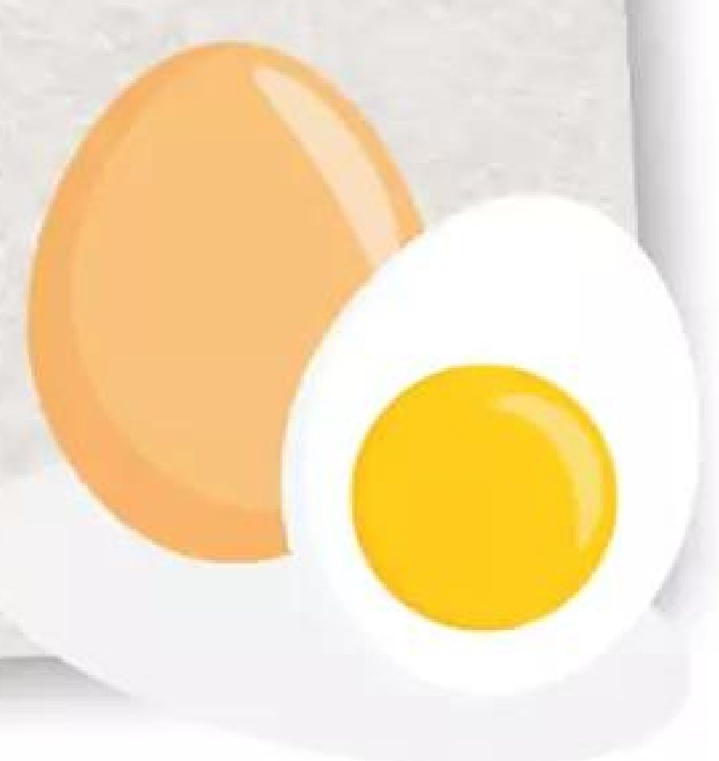
Get started with reducing UPFs

Read ingredient labels carefully – if a product contains a long list of additives, artificial flavour enhancers, or stabilisers, it's likely ultra-processed. Swap packed snacks for whole-food alternatives, such as fresh fruit, nuts, Greek yoghurt, or houmous with veg sticks.

Cook at home more often to reduce reliance on convenience foods. Start with simple, nutritious meals like stir-fries, soups, salads and traybakes. Make your own versions of processed favourites, such as granola, energy bars, or dressings and sauces using whole ingredients.

Make it easy

Plan and prepare meals ahead of time to avoid reaching for processed options. Keep nutrient-dense snacks like boiled eggs, nut butter, or overnight oats on hand. If buying packaged foods, look for short ingredient lists with recognisable whole-food ingredients.



Did you know these foods were ultra-processed?

These household faves are often ultra-processed – here are some simple swaps to stop you missing them

Sneaky ultra-processed foods	Easy ways to replace them
Flavoured granola bars	Homemade granola – it's simpler than it looks (see recipe above right)!
Sugary breakfast cereal	Porridge oats with low-fat milk, banana and berries
Vegan mock meats	Smoky BBQ tempeh
White bread	Whole grain bread from a local baker

Recipe taken from *Unprocessed Made Easy* by Delicia Bale, published by Ebury, £20.

unprocessed made easy

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Maple cinnamon granola

Instead of ultra-processed shop-bought granola, make this homemade version with anti-inflammatory cinnamon

By Delicia Bale

Serves **6** | Prep **15 mins** | Cook **20-25 mins**

- **200g (2 cups) oats**
- **60g (½ cup) flaked almonds**
- **60g (½ cup) hazelnuts, chopped**
- **50g (½ cup) pecans, chopped**
- **50g (½ cup) desiccated coconut**
- **50g (⅓ cup) pumpkin seeds**
- **80g (⅓ cup) coconut oil, melted**
- **100ml (scant ½ cup) maple syrup**
- **1 tsp vanilla extract**
- **1 tsp ground cinnamon**
- **a pinch of salt**

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C/ Gas Mark 3.
2. Mix together the oats, flaked almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, coconut, pumpkin seeds, coconut oil, maple syrup, vanilla extract, cinnamon and salt until well combined.
3. Spread the mixture evenly onto a lined baking sheet – you may need to split it between two sheets as it won't cook all the way through if it's too thick.
4. Bake for 20-25 minutes until the granola is slightly golden.
5. Leave the granola to cool for about 30 minutes, then break into pieces to store.

Habit tracker

Today I... Swapped an ultra-processed food for a whole food alternative

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Kefir smoothie with berries

Lunch

Quinoa salad with butternut squash and tahini dressing

Dinner

Tofu stir-fry with ginger and brown rice

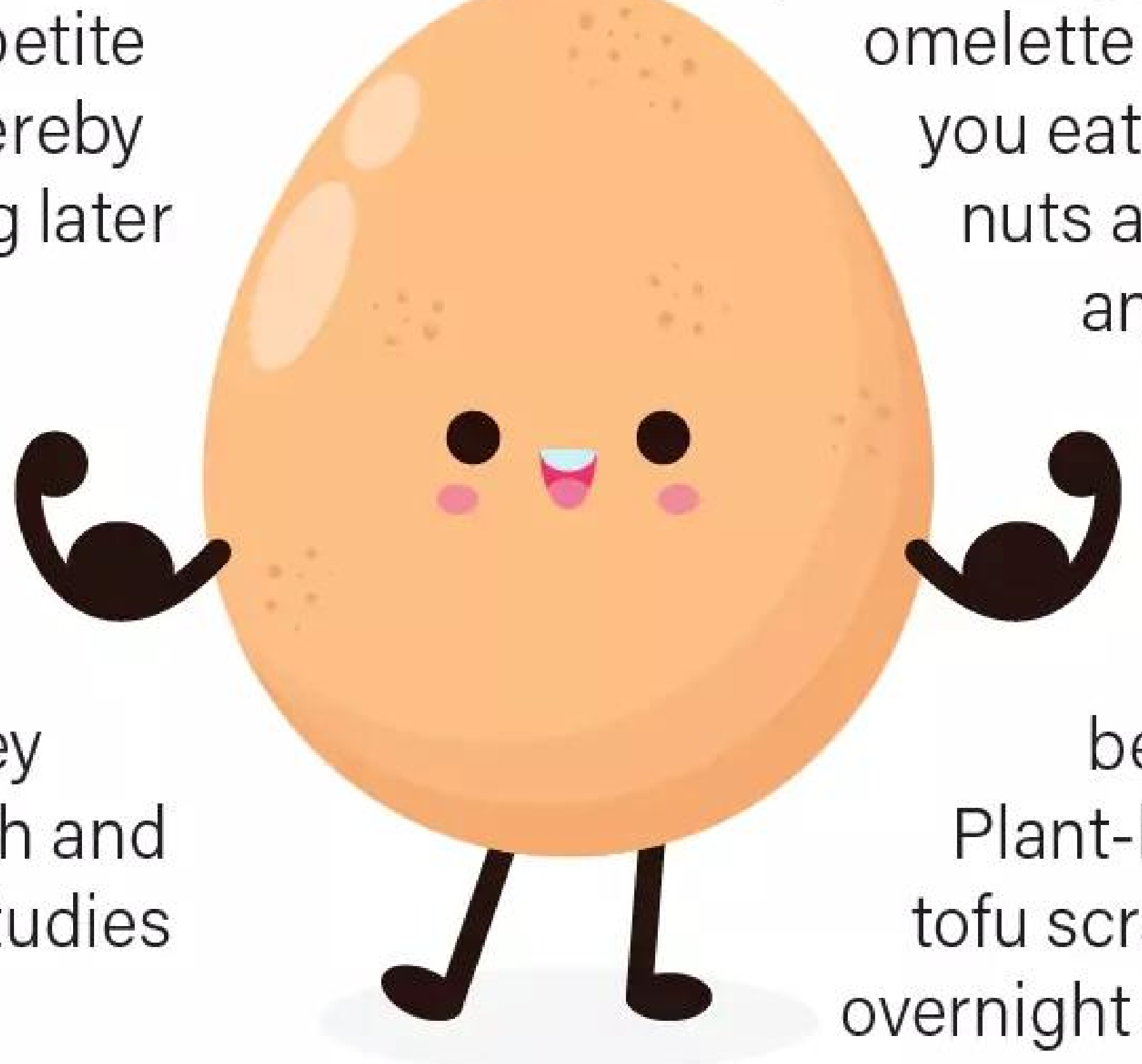
DAY 24

Today focus on starting the day with protein

Starting the day with protein will keep you feeling full for longer and stop you snacking

A protein-rich breakfast helps balance blood sugar, sustain energy levels and reduce mid-morning cravings. Unlike carb-heavy breakfasts that can cause spikes and crashes in blood sugar, protein provides a slower, steadier release of energy, keeping you feeling full for longer. Research suggests that consuming adequate protein in the morning can regulate appetite hormones like ghrelin, thereby helping to curb overeating later in the day.

Protein is also crucial for muscle repair, immune function and neurotransmitter production, making it a key nutrient for immune health and lowering inflammation. Studies have linked high-protein breakfasts to improved cognitive function, which makes them particularly beneficial for aiding concentration and productivity.



Here's how to get started with a protein-rich breakfast

Eggs are an easy and versatile option – try scrambled eggs with spinach, poached eggs on sourdough, or an omelette packed with veggies. If you eat dairy, Greek yoghurt with nuts and seeds adds protein and healthy fats. For a quick grab-and-go option, a protein smoothie with nut butter, protein powder, spinach and berries can work well. Plant-based eaters can opt for tofu scramble, chia pudding, or overnight oats with hemp seeds.

Make it easy

Boil eggs in advance for a simple breakfast on busy mornings. Blend a smoothie with protein powder and nut butter for a quick meal. Prepare overnight chia pudding with added protein powder or yoghurt parfaits the night before to save time.

4 *protein-packed* breakfasts to kickstart your day

A protein-rich breakfast will give you plenty of energy and help you feel fuller

Your taste	Protein-packed options
If you have a sweet tooth	Greek yoghurt with granola, nuts and berries
If you have busy mornings	Smoothie with kefir or yoghurt, banana and peanut butter
If you prefer something savoury	Breakfast burrito with scrambled eggs and black beans
If you love a posh brunch	Smoked salmon and avocado on wholemeal toast

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Veggie breakfast tortilla

Eggs and cheese provide plenty of protein to start the day the right way

Serves **4** | Prep **5 mins** | Cook **5 mins** per tortilla

4 small tortilla wraps

1 red pepper, finely chopped

2 spring onions (scallions), chopped

75g (½ cup) cherry tomatoes, sliced

a handful of spinach, roughly chopped

1 tsp smoked paprika

a drizzle of olive oil

4 free-range eggs

75g (¾ cup) grated cheese of your choice

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6 or an air fryer to 190°C/370°F, if you have one. Line a baking tray or the air fryer basket with baking parchment.
2. Mix the veg in the bowl with the paprika and season well. Mix with a drizzle of olive oil.
3. Place a tortilla on the paper, then top with the chopped vegetables. Crack an egg on the top and then sprinkle with cheese.
4. Bake for 10-12 minutes, or air fry for 5 minutes, until the egg white has set, then repeat with your remaining tortillas.

Habit tracker

✓ **Today I...** Had a protein-rich breakfast

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Kefir smoothie with berries

Lunch

Roasted vegetable and cannellini bean salad

Dinner

Baked cod with roasted vegetables and brown rice

DAY 25

Today focus on reducing your alcohol intake

Swap out booze for non-alcoholic drinks or herbal teas to support your liver health

Cutting back on alcohol can have a profound impact on your overall health, particularly in reducing inflammation and supporting liver function. Alcohol places a burden on the liver, which is responsible for detoxification, hormone regulation and metabolising toxins. Excessive alcohol consumption is linked to increased oxidative stress, gut imbalances and elevated inflammatory markers, all of which contribute to chronic health conditions.

Reducing alcohol doesn't mean missing out on social occasions or relaxation. Many people find that swapping alcoholic drinks for non-alcoholic alternatives, herbal teas, or infused sparkling water can be just as enjoyable. Additionally, taking a break from alcohol can improve sleep quality, mental clarity and energy levels. Research suggests that even moderate reductions in alcohol intake can lead to better mood stability and improved gut health.

Here's how to get started with reducing alcohol

Explore alcohol-free alternatives, such as kombucha, non-alcoholic wines and beers, or herbal teas. Set a goal to have more alcohol-free days during the week or try a designated alcohol-free month to reset habits. Engage in activities that don't revolve around drinking, such as evening walks, yoga, or reading supportive books about mindful drinking and lifestyle changes. If social drinking is a challenge, prepare by having an alternative drink in hand, such as sparkling water with citrus and fresh herbs.

Make it easy

Keep a selection of non-alcoholic drinks at home, experiment with new herbal teas, and find enjoyable alcohol-free rituals, such as making a mocktail or unwinding with a book instead of a glass of wine.

4 *delicious* mocktails to try

Going booze-free doesn't have to be boring, just use your imagination

Mocktail	How to make it
Berry Spritz	Muddle mixed berries in a glass with honey and lemon juice. Fill with ice and top with sparkling water. Stir and garnish with mint.
Tropical Sunset	Fill a glass with ice and add orange and pineapple juice. Drizzle with grenadine and garnish with an orange slice.
Cucumber Cooler	Muddle cucumber, lime juice and honey in a glass. Add ice and top with soda water. Stir and garnish with mint or a cucumber slice.
Pomegranate Fizz	Fill a glass with ice and add pomegranate and lemon juice. Top with sparkling water and serve with a garnish of pomegranate seeds.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Flora and fruits mocktail

Serve up a hydrating Happy Hour treat without the booze

Serves **1** | Prep **5 mins** | Cook **none**

¼ of a lemon, thinly sliced

¼ of an orange, thinly sliced

crushed ice or small ice cubes

½ a pomegranate

100ml (scant ½ cup) pomegranate juice

175ml (¾ cup) elderflower tonic

a sprig of rosemary

1 Line a tumbler glass with a couple of slices of the lemon and orange. Fill the glass halfway up with the crushed or cubed ice.

2 Remove the seeds from the pomegranate half and add these to the glass. Pour over the pomegranate juice, top up with the elderflower tonic and finish with a sprig of rosemary.

Habit tracker

○ **Today I...** Swapped alcohol for a healthier alternative

Do this... **5 DAYS A WEEK**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Porridge with blueberries and flaxseeds

Lunch

Lentil and spinach soup

Dinner

Turkey meatballs with courgette noodles

DAY 26

Today focus on vitamin D

Vitamin D is a crucial nutrient for immune regulation and inflammation control

Vitamin D is a powerful anti-inflammatory nutrient that plays a critical role in immune function, bone health and inflammation regulation. Despite being called the 'sunshine vitamin', vitamin D is actually a hormone that influences over 200 genes and it impacts nearly every system in the body. Low vitamin D levels are linked to higher inflammatory markers, an increased risk of autoimmune diseases, weakened immune function, and poor mood regulation as well.

One of the main ways the body produces vitamin D is through sun exposure, but factors such as limited daylight, sunscreen use, darker skin tones and spending more time indoors mean that many people don't get enough. Research shows that vitamin D deficiency is common, especially in winter months, and can contribute to fatigue, joint pain, weakened immunity and even depression. Since it's difficult to get enough vitamin D through food alone, many people benefit from additional supplementation during darker months.

Here's how you can make sure to get enough vitamin D

Spend time outside daily, ideally get 15-30 minutes of direct sunlight on the skin (without sunscreen) when possible.

Eat vitamin D-rich foods, such as oily fish (salmon, sardines, mackerel), egg yolks, and mushrooms that have been exposed to sunlight.

Consider a vitamin D3 supplement, especially from autumn to spring, when sunlight exposure is lower.

Make it easy

Get your vitamin D levels tested to determine if supplementation is needed. If outdoor exposure is difficult, try using a light therapy lamp in the morning to help support circadian rhythm and mood. Keep vitamin D-rich foods stocked in your diet, and aim to get outside daily, even if it's just a short walk in natural light.

4 *ways* to get vitamin D if the sun isn't shining

You can't control the weather – but here are a few things you can do for an extra hit of vitamin D

Top tip	How to do it
Eat vitamin D-rich food	Eating foods that have a high vitamin D content can help you stay topped up, even when the sun isn't shining. Think fatty fish, egg yolks and mushrooms.
Take a vitamin D supplement	Supplements can provide a reliable source of vitamin D in winter months. Taking Vitamin D3 is the most effective way – but always check the dosage and chat to a GP if you're unsure.
Use light therapy	Special UVB lamps can mimic sunlight, helping your body produce vitamin D, even when it's cloudy. Make sure you get one that specifically emits UVB and start with 5-10 minutes of daily exposure.
Maximise time outdoors	Even on cloudy days, a local UV index above 3 still allows your body to produce vitamin D. The hours between 10am and 3pm are when the UV rays are strongest, so try to get some time outside.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Salmon with crispy kale and beetroot pickle

Fatty fish like salmon is a good source of vitamin D

By Fern Green

Serves **2** | Prep **5 mins** | Cook **20 mins**

- **2 salmon fillets, skin on**
- **150g (3-5 cups) kale, stripped off the spine**
- **1 tsp grated lemon zest**
- **1 medium beetroot, peeled and either grated or julienned**
- **1 tsp apple cider vinegar**
- **2 tbsp olive oil**
- **1 tbsp chopped parsley**
- **lemon wedges**

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/ Gas Mark 4. Mix the beetroot with 1 tbsp of olive oil and 1 tsp of cider vinegar, season and set aside to marinate.
2. Drizzle olive oil over the kale, season and add the lemon zest. Using your hands, massage the kale to fully combine.
3. Season the salmon all over, and drizzle with olive oil. Bake in the oven for 10-15 minutes or air fry for 7 minutes. Add the kale to the oven, and bake both for around 10 minutes, or until crispy.
4. Check that the salmon is cooked through and the kale is crispy. Serve sprinkled with parsley, beetroot pickle and a squeeze of lemon.

Habit tracker

☑ **Today I...** Have topped up my vitamin D

Do this... **EVERY DAY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Porridge with blueberries and flaxseeds

Lunch

Quinoa salad with butternut squash and tahini dressing

Dinner

Chicken and cauliflower traybake

DAY
27

Today focus on reducing added sugars

Cut back on hidden sugars in sauces, drinks and cereals to support metabolic health

Excessive sugar intake is a major contributor to inflammation, metabolic imbalances and energy crashes. Added sugars, especially those hidden in processed foods like sauces, cereals and flavoured yoghurts, can cause blood sugar spikes followed by crashes, leading to fatigue, cravings and an increased risk of insulin resistance. High sugar consumption has also been linked to increased inflammatory markers, gut dysbiosis and higher risks of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and experiencing cardiovascular issues. Many packaged foods contain hidden sugars under names like dextrose, maltose and high-fructose corn syrup, making it easy to consume more than recommended. The World Health Organization suggests keeping added sugar intake below 10 per cent of daily calories, but even making small reductions can make a difference in stabilising energy and reducing inflammation.

Here's how to get started with reducing added sugars

Start by reading food labels and looking out for hidden sugars in everyday products, such as salad dressings, granola bars and flavoured drinks. Swap processed snacks for whole foods, such as fruit, nuts and yoghurt with natural toppings. If you enjoy sweetened coffee or tea, gradually reduce the amount of sugar or try alternatives like cinnamon or vanilla for flavour. Cooking from scratch also helps control sugar intake by using whole ingredients.

Make it easy

Keep naturally sweet foods like berries or apples on hand, swap sugary drinks for herbal tea or sparkling water with lemon, and find sugar-free alternatives for your favourite condiments and snacks. As a rule of thumb, try to avoid any product with more than 5 grams of sugar per 100 grams.

Sneaky sugar foods to swap for healthy alternatives

Be aware of these supposedly 'healthy' snacks that are often packed with sugar

Sneakily sugary	Simple swap
Fruit-flavoured yoghurt	Many flavoured yoghurts are packing an extra 10-20g of added sugar per serving. Swap for Greek yoghurt and add your favourite fruit.
Granola bars	They're easy to pick up on the go, but these bars are often full of sugar. Make your own granola or grab a banana instead.
Shop-bought smoothies	Whizzing up some fruit, yoghurt and seeds is a healthier alternative to buying a pre-made smoothie or juice.
Protein bars	They may be a handy boost after a workout, but they're often just chocolate bars in disguise. Try making your own protein balls instead.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Granola with peaches and yoghurt

Shop-bought granola is notoriously sugary, so make your own version complete with anti-inflammatory spices

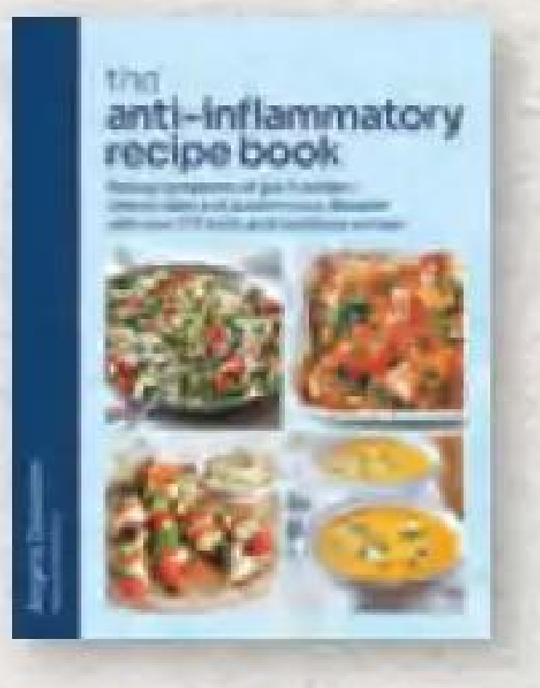
By Angela Dowden

Serves **4** | Prep **15 mins** | Cook **45 mins**

200g (2 cups) rolled oats
50g (¼ cup) wheatgerm
50g (⅓ cup) sunflower seeds
25g (3 tbsp) sesame seeds or flaxseeds (linseeds)
50g (⅓ cup) pumpkin seeds
50g (⅓ cup) whole blanched almonds
50g (⅓ cup) hazelnuts
½ tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground mixed spice
¼ tsp salt
3 tbsp maple syrup
1 tbsp molasses or treacle
2 tbsp rapeseed (canola) oil
75g (½ cup) ready-to-eat dried apricots, chopped
50g (⅓ cup) dried cranberries
50g (⅓ cup) sultanas
350ml (1½ cups) fat-free Greek yoghurt
2 peaches, stoned and sliced

1. Preheat the oven to 140°C/Gas Mark 1.
2. Mix together the cereals, seeds, nuts, spices and salt in a large bowl.
3. Heat the maple syrup, molasses or treacle, oil and 2 tbsp water in a small saucepan, then pour over the dry ingredients. Stir until thoroughly combined.
4. Tip the mixture onto a large, lightly oiled baking sheet, then press down firmly to make clumps.
5. Place in the preheated oven for about 30 minutes.
6. Add the dried fruits and stir gently to combine. Return to the oven for a further 15 minutes or until evenly crisp and golden brown.
7. Leave to cool on the baking sheet (it will continue to crisp up as it cools), then store in an airtight container for up to 1 week. To serve, spoon into serving bowls and top with the yoghurt and peaches.

Recipe taken from *The Anti-inflammatory Recipe Book*, by Angela Dowden, published by Hamlyn, £18.99. Recipe photography by William Shaw.



Habit tracker

Today I... Actively reduced my sugar intake

Do this... **5 DAYS A WEEK**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Black bean breakfast burrito

Lunch

Roasted vegetable and cannellini bean salad

Dinner

Roasted salmon with peppers and baby potatoes

DAY 28

Today focus on staying connected

Strong relationships can help to regulate your stress response and inflammation

Make it easy

Schedule a weekly check-in with a friend or family member. Combine social time with movement, such as walking or exercising together, to boost both physical and mental health. If feeling disconnected, take small steps – start by sending a message, making a call, or planning a simple social activity.

Strong social connections are vital for emotional wellbeing, stress regulation and inflammation reduction. Research shows that meaningful relationships help regulate the body's stress response, lowering levels of cortisol and pro-inflammatory markers like C-reactive protein (CRP). In contrast, chronic loneliness and social isolation have been linked to higher inflammation, increased risk of heart disease, weakened immune function and even cognitive decline.

When we engage in positive social interactions, our body releases oxytocin, a hormone that promotes feelings of trust, relaxation and connection. This, in turn, helps counteract the negative effects of chronic stress and inflammation, improving both mental and physical health. Whether it's through family, friends, community groups, or even pets, staying connected can enhance resilience, emotional support and overall happiness.

Here's how to strengthen your social connections

Prioritise face-to-face interactions when they are possible – meeting a friend for a coffee or walk can be more beneficial than texting.

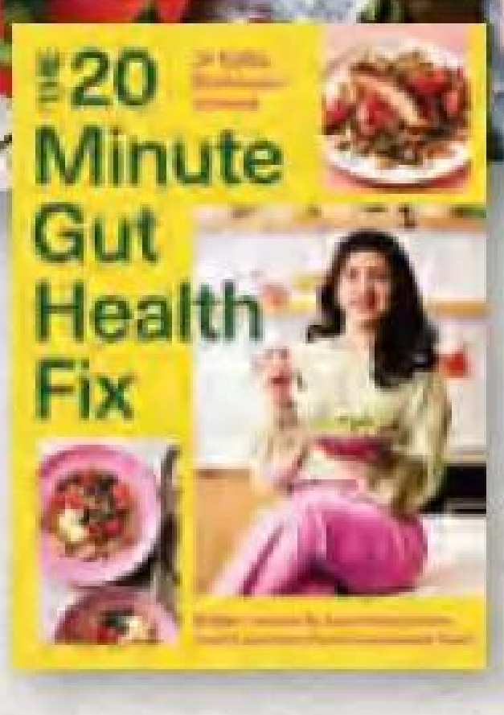
Engage in community activities like group fitness classes, book clubs, or volunteering, in order to develop meaningful relationships.

Join support networks or online groups if in-person connections are difficult to maintain, because even digital interactions can provide you with a sense of belonging.

4 *ways* to be more social

Want to broaden your social horizons? Start with these suggestions

For those who are get-up-and-go types	Join a run club, walking group or pop along to your local fitness class. You'll be surprised how many people are there because they want a chat.
For the quieter souls	A choir, book group or yoga class is a great way to be around people without having to talk non-stop.
For the people who like giving back	Volunteering is a fantastic way to stay connected with people who share your values. Go along to a food bank, animal shelter or local fundraising event.
For those confident in the kitchen	Start your own supper club. Cook up a storm and issue a call-out to your neighbours to join for a chat and a bite to eat. Next time, it can be someone else's turn!



Recipe taken from *The 20-Minute Gut Health Fix* by Dr Saliha Mahmood Ahmed, published by Yellow Kite in hardback, £26.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Greek salad stuffed peppers

A delicious dish that's straight from the Mediterranean diet

By Dr Saliha Mahmood Ahmed

Serves **2** | Prep **15 mins** | Cook **20 mins**

2 red peppers
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra to drizzle
100g (½ cup) leftover cooked rice or other grain
½ a 400g tin (¾ cup) of chickpeas, drained, rinsed
1 tsp garlic paste
1 tsp dried oregano
½ tsp red chilli flakes
½ a red onion, diced
a handful of parsley, chopped
150g (1 cup) cherry tomatoes, halved
100g (1 cup) feta cheese
salt, to taste

1 Halve the peppers lengthways, remove the seeds and core and rub them with about a tbsp of the olive oil. Transfer to the air fryer and roast for 5 minutes at 200°C/400°F. (Alternatively, roast for 10 minutes in a conventional oven preheated to the same temperature – 200°C/Gas Mark 6.)

2 While the peppers are roasting, combine the cooked rice, chickpeas, garlic, oregano, chilli flakes and the remaining olive oil and season with salt to taste.

3 Remove the tray holding the peppers from the air fryer and carefully spoon this rice mixture into the peppers. Stud the surface of the stuffed peppers with the diced red onion, parsley and tomatoes, then crumble over the feta cheese and drizzle with a little extra olive oil. Return to the air fryer for 6-8 minutes at 200°C/400°F for a perfect stuffed pepper (or 10 minutes in a conventional oven).

Habit tracker

✓ **Today I...** Made an effort to be more social

Do this... **3-4 TIMES A WEEK**

End of week reflection

The habit I enjoyed most this week was...

My favourite meal this week was...

The habit I think benefited me most was...

My biggest takeaway from this week is...

The habit I struggled with most was...

My new favourite ingredient is...

Overall this week my health has been...

Number of days I moved more:

Amount of water I drank each day:

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast
Black bean breakfast burrito

Lunch
Lentil and spinach soup

Dinner
Baked garlic chicken with sweet potato mash and green beans

DAY 29

Today focus on minimising environmental toxins

Reduce plastics, synthetic fragrances and processed household goods where possible

Every day, we're exposed to environmental toxins that can contribute to inflammation, hormonal imbalances and other health issues. Many household items, from plastic containers to synthetic fragrances, contain chemicals that can act as endocrine disruptors, interfere with detoxification pathways and increase oxidative stress in the body. We can't eliminate all toxins from our environment, but reducing exposure where possible can help to lower the body's toxic burden.

Some of the worst offenders include synthetic fragrances in air fresheners, perfumes, candles and cleaning products, which often contain phthalates – compounds that can disrupt hormone function. Plastics, particularly those containing bisphenol A (BPA) and phthalates, can leach harmful chemicals into food and drinks. Additionally, heavy metals, pesticides and chemical-laden personal care products can contribute to long-term toxicity and inflammation.

The Environmental Working Group (EWG – ewg.org) provides excellent resources to identify safer alternatives to household and personal care products, helping you make informed choices about what you bring into your home.

Here's how to get started with reducing environmental toxins

Swap plastic food storage for glass or stainless steel and avoid heating food in plastic containers. Choose fragrance-free or naturally scented personal care and cleaning products. Look for organic produce if possible to reduce pesticide exposure, and opt for non-toxic cookware like stainless steel or cast-iron instead of non-stick coatings. Check product safety ratings using the Skin Deep database at the EWG or their Healthy Cleaning Guide to find safer alternatives.

Make it easy

Start by replacing one common toxin source at a time, such as switching to a glass water bottle or using an essential oil diffuser instead of synthetic air fresheners. Gradually build a cleaner environment for yourself without feeling overwhelmed.

4 *natural alternatives* to household products

You'll likely already have the ingredients for these simple swaps in your kitchen

Instead of...	Try these...
All-purpose cleaner	Mix equal parts water and white vinegar with a few drops of lemon or tea tree oil to eliminate odours, remove grease and disinfect surfaces.
Make-up remover	Try using coconut oil or even olive oil to remove stubborn make up. Apply a small amount, massage into your face and then wipe off with a damp cloth.
Fabric softener	Add 125ml of white vinegar to your rinse cycle and it will soften clothes, prevent static and remove residue. Your clothes shouldn't smell of vinegar, don't worry!
Dry shampoo	Instead of dry shampoo aerosols, which can be harmful, try applying a small amount of cornflour (for light hair) or cocoa powder (for dark hair) to help absorb excess oil.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Griddled halloumi with salsa verde dressing

A simple salad of halloumi and peaches served with plenty of herbs and extra-virgin olive oil

By Opies (bennettopie.com)

Serves **4** | Prep **15 mins** | Cook **5 mins**

30g (1 cup) fresh flat-leaf parsley
30g (1 cup) fresh basil
15g (½ cup) fresh mint
1 tbsp Opies Capers, rinsed and drained
2 tbsp Opies Mini Gherkins, finely chopped
2 tbsp red wine vinegar
5 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, 1 tbsp reserved for the halloumi
1 tsp Dijon mustard
½ garlic clove, minced
juice of ½ a lemon
salt and pepper, to taste
2 x 225g blocks of halloumi cheese, thickly sliced
salad leaves and griddled peaches, to serve (optional)

1 Remove the stalks from the parsley, basil and mint, then finely chop the leaves together and add to a bowl.

2 Finely chop the capers and cocktail gherkins, then add to the bowl along with the red wine vinegar, olive oil, Dijon mustard, garlic and lemon juice. Add more olive oil or red wine vinegar if needed – the sauce should be tangy, thin and pourable in consistency. Season to taste.

3 Preheat a barbecue until the coals are white, or if using a griddle pan, heat on the hob until hot.

4 Brush the halloumi slices with the remaining olive oil and griddle for 1-2 minutes on each side or until charred lines are visible.

5 Arrange the salad leaves on plates, then place the halloumi slices on top, followed by the peach slices if using. Drizzle over the salsa verde dressing and serve straight away.

TIP: Leave the salsa verde in the fridge overnight to allow the flavours to really mingle. Use up any leftover dressing on grilled meats, fish or mixed into pasta salad.

Habit tracker

☐ **Today I...** Identified and replaced an environmental toxin in my home

Do this... **REGULARLY**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Yoghurt with peaches and honey

Lunch

Chicken wrap with sweet potato and spices

Dinner

Tofu and mushroom miso noodle soup

DAY 30

Today focus on time-restricted eating

Give your digestion a break overnight (a 12-hour fast) to help reduce inflammation

Time-restricted eating (TRE) is a simple yet effective way to support digestion, reduce inflammation and enhance metabolic health by aligning food intake with the body's natural circadian rhythm. It involves eating within a set window each day, allowing the digestive system to rest overnight. Studies suggest that TRE can help regulate blood sugar, support weight management and promote cellular repair through a process called autophagy – the body's way of 'cleaning up' damaged cells and regenerating new, healthier ones.

Autophagy, which literally means 'self-eating', is the body's natural recycling system, clearing out dysfunctional components and protecting against inflammation, oxidative stress and even age-related diseases. It is activated during fasting periods when the body isn't focused on digesting food, allowing it to repair and regenerate cells more efficiently.

Here's how to get started with time-restricted eating

A common and beginner-friendly approach is the 12:12 method, where you fast for 12 hours overnight (for instance finishing dinner at 7pm and eating breakfast at 7am). For those looking to extend the fasting window, the 14:10 or 16:8 methods (fasting for 14 or 16 hours and eating within a 10 or 8-hour window) can offer additional benefits. The key is to find a schedule that feels sustainable for you without causing stress or extreme hunger.

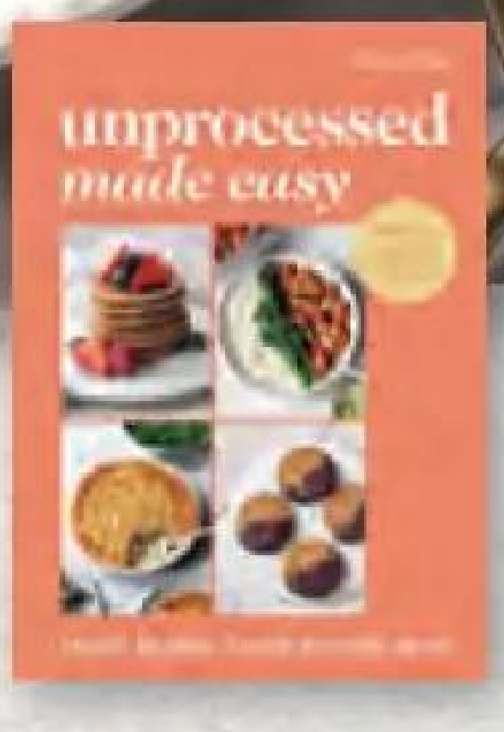
Make it easy

Start by simply extending the time between your last meal and breakfast by an hour. Stay hydrated with water, herbal tea, or black coffee during the fasting window, and focus on nutrient-dense meals when you eat. Listen to your body and ease into longer fasting windows gradually.

4 *ways* to stay full before a digestion break

Fasting overnight will be much easier if you eat well beforehand

What to eat and drink	Why to eat or drink it
Protein-rich foods	Foods with plenty of protein will slow digestion and keep you fuller for longer. Think chicken, tofu, eggs or cottage cheese.
Plenty of fibre	Fibre also slows digestion down. Make sure you're eating foods that are rich in fibre, such as lentils, beans, whole grains and vegetables.
Healthy fats	Healthy fats will help you feel full without spiking hunger, as they provide long-lasting energy. Top up on nuts, avocados and fatty fish.
Drinks with electrolytes	Sometimes when we feel hungry, we're actually dehydrated! Drink coconut water, herbal teas or water with lemon and a pinch of salt.



Recipe taken from *Unprocessed Made Easy* by Delicia Bale, published by Ebury, £20.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

Chicken Caesar salad with croutons

A hearty chicken salad will slow digestion and keep you feeling fuller for longer

By Delicia Bale

Serves **4** | Prep **20 mins** | Cook **20 mins**

For the chickpea croutons

- 400g tin (1⅔ cups) of chickpeas, drained, rinsed
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp garlic granules
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried parsley
- salt and black pepper

For the dressing

- 6 tbsp Greek yoghurt
- juice of 1 lemon
- 30g (⅓ cup) Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 tbsp white wine vinegar
- a dash of Worcestershire sauce
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 anchovies

For the salad

- 400g (8-12 cups) baby leaf mixed green salad
- 2 avocados, chopped
- 4 cooked chicken breasts, shredded
- grated Parmesan

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6.
2. Put the chickpeas in a bowl along with the olive oil, garlic granules, oregano, parsley and salt and pepper and mix well to coat the chickpeas.
3. Spread the chickpeas out in a thin layer on a baking tray and bake for about 20 minutes until they are golden and crispy, then set aside.
4. In a food processor, blend the Greek yoghurt, lemon juice, Parmesan cheese, white wine vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, garlic and anchovies to form a smooth and creamy dressing.
5. To assemble the salad, start with a bed of the baby leaves, avocado and shredded chicken and then sprinkle over the chickpea croutons and Parmesan. Drizzle over the dressing to serve.

Habit tracker

Today I... Tried time-restricted eating

Do this... **5 DAYS A WEEK**

How I felt today

Check in with how your body is feeling on a scale of 1-5

		Notes
Energy	☆☆☆☆☆	
Mood	☆☆☆☆☆	
Stress	☆☆☆☆☆	
Joint pain	☆☆☆☆☆	
Muscle aches	☆☆☆☆☆	
Digestive health	☆☆☆☆☆	
Skin	☆☆☆☆☆	
Brain fog	☆☆☆☆☆	
Sleep	☆☆☆☆☆	

Keep it simple

MENU OF THE DAY

Breakfast

Yoghurt with peaches and honey

Lunch

Broccoli and pea soup

Dinner

Steamed cod with lemon, ginger and green beans

The next 30 DAYS

It’s time to apply everything you’ve learned over the last 30 days to the next 30 days and beyond. This daily checklist will help you keep track of the key habits you adopted over the last month – and there's space to add at least one of your own too.

WEEK 5/6	Day 31	Day 32	Day 33	Day 34	Day 35	Day 36	Day 37
Make healthy swaps	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cook from scratch	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eat mindfully	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Drink 2 litres of water	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sleep for 7 hours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Move your body	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How did you feel this week? ☆☆☆☆☆

WEEK 6/7	Day 38	Day 39	Day 40	Day 41	Day 42	Day 43	Day 44
Make healthy swaps	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cook from scratch	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eat mindfully	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Drink 2 litres of water	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sleep for 7 hours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Move your body	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How did you feel this week? ☆☆☆☆☆

WEEK 7/8	Day 45	Day 46	Day 47	Day 48	Day 49	Day 50	Day 51
Make healthy swaps	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cook from scratch	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eat mindfully	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Drink 2 litres of water	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sleep for 7 hours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Move your body	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How did you feel this week? ☆☆☆☆☆

WEEK 8/9	Day 52	Day 53	Day 54	Day 55	Day 56	Day 57	Day 58
Make healthy swaps	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cook from scratch	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eat mindfully	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Drink 2 litres of water	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sleep for 7 hours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Move your body	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How did you feel this week? ☆☆☆☆☆

WEEK 9	Day 59	Day 60
Make healthy swaps	☐	☐
Cook from scratch	☐	☐
Eat mindfully	☐	☐
Drink 2 litres of water	☐	☐
Sleep for 7 hours	☐	☐
Move your body	☐	☐
	☐	☐

How did you feel this week? ☆☆☆☆☆

End of month reflection

The habit I think benefited me most was...

The habit I struggled with most was...

Overall this month my health has been...

My biggest takeaway from this month is...

COOKBOOK AirFryer

STEP UP YOUR AIR FRYER GAME!

NEWSSTAND MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR 2024
COOKBOOK
AirFryer
How to cook almost anything in your air fryer
ISSUE 12 MARCH/APRIL 2025
116 RECIPES & TIPS
Everyday Easy
Create simple & delicious feel-good meals for the whole family
Including:

SAVE 30% OFF THE REGULAR COVER PRICE

Looking for air fryer inspiration? Order the *Air Fryer Cookbook* 2025 Bundle, and get a year's worth of recipes for just £33.50!

Order our bundle today and we'll send you every issue as it's published, meaning you'll never run out of recipes for your favourite kitchen gadget. Plus, you'll **save 30%** off the cover price of the magazine! Then just sit back, relax, and wait for air fryer inspiration to come to you...

ORDER EASILY ONLINE AT:

tinyurl.com/AirFryerBundle2025

Or scan the QR code now to buy your bundle

Terms & conditions: Saving is based on the UK cover price. Offer only available to UK customers, and while stocks last. Issues will be sent out as they are published.

The science behind the habits

Now we've discovered the 30 steps we can take to improve our lives, it's time to look in more detail at the foods that can help us and the actions we can take...

The elimination diet 84
Food sensitivity journal 87
Other diets that can help 88
Top 20 ingredients 92
10 worst ingredients 96
Food swaps 98
Food chart 100
Maintain healthy habits 102
Sleep 104
Stress 107
Exercise 110

The elimination diet

Words: Rob Hobson

Every body is different, but if you can work out which foods trigger or exacerbate your inflammation, then you are one step closer to easing the problem

Inflammation is the body's natural defence mechanism, but when it lingers, it can contribute to persistent health issues, such as digestive discomfort, joint pain, skin conditions and fatigue. Some people may unknowingly consume foods that trigger or exacerbate inflammation, making it difficult to pinpoint the cause of their symptoms. One of the most effective ways to uncover these dietary triggers is through an elimination diet, which is a structured approach to identifying food sensitivities that may be impacting your health.

What is an elimination diet?

An elimination diet is a temporary eating plan that is designed to help identify food sensitivities or intolerances. During the diet you remove certain foods for a set period and then reintroduce them methodically so you can see how your body reacts. This process provides an insight into which foods may be causing symptoms, so you are able to make more informed dietary choices.

Unlike food allergies, which can trigger an immediate immune response, food sensitivities and intolerances often lead to more subtle symptoms that in some cases can still be chronic. These can range from digestive issues to skin flare-ups, headaches or fatigue.

The goal of an elimination diet is to:

- Identify foods that may contribute to inflammation and discomfort.
- Improve your wellbeing by reducing or eliminating problematic foods.
- Gain a clearer understanding of how different foods impact your body.

These diets can be highly effective, but you need to approach them with caution. Prolonged or unsupervised restriction of food groups could lead to nutritional deficiencies, particularly if key nutrients such as calcium or fibre are eliminated without proper substitutions. It is best to undertake an elimination diet under the guidance of a registered nutritionist or dietitian.

How to do an elimination diet

The elimination diet has three phases: preparation, elimination and reintroduction. Each phase plays a role in identifying and confirming food sensitivities.

STEP 1: PREPARATION

Before you start an elimination diet it's important to prepare correctly to ensure the process is properly organised and goes smoothly. Consider the following:

Track your symptoms:
Keep a journal of any symptoms you experience, such as bloating, headaches, skin irritation, or fatigue. This baseline helps to track reactions or improvements during the diet.

Set a timeline: Commit to the elimination phase for 2-4 weeks. This timeframe allows potential triggers to

clear from your system and provides a clearer picture of symptom changes.

Plan your meals: Stock up on whole, minimally-processed foods to make meal preparation easier and reduce the temptation of restricted foods.

Seek professional guidance: If you have underlying health conditions or dietary concerns, consulting a registered nutritionist or dietitian can provide additional support and ensure your diet remains nutritionally balanced.

STEP 2: ELIMINATION PHASE

During this phase there are some common trigger foods that may be removed entirely from your diet. These often include:

Dairy: Milk, cheese, yoghurt, butter and cream.

Gluten: Wheat, barley, rye and many processed foods.

Soy: Soy milk, tofu, tempeh and other soy-based products.

Eggs: Both egg whites and yolks.

Nuts and seeds: Particularly peanuts and tree nuts.

Nightshades: Tomatoes, potatoes, peppers and aubergines.

Ultra-processed foods: Anything containing artificial additives, preservatives or sweeteners.

During this phase you should focus on nutrient-dense, whole foods like fresh vegetables, fruits, lean proteins (such as fish, poultry, legumes), and healthy fats (such as olive oil, avocado). Ensure you're eating enough to maintain energy levels while avoiding restricted foods.

While elimination diets can help identify specific triggers, they don't necessarily work for everyone. Research suggests that their success largely depends on an individual's unique physiology and the specific symptoms being addressed. These

> "During the diet you remove certain foods for a set period and then reintroduce them"

diets are also effective in managing diagnosed food sensitivities rather than preventing them.

STEP 3: REINTRODUCTION PHASE

After the elimination period, you'll start reintroducing foods one at a time. This phase is essential for identifying trigger foods and it requires careful tracking.

Select one food to reintroduce: Choose a single food group, such as dairy or gluten, and consume it two to three times over one day.

Monitor symptoms: Observe your body's response for 48-72 hours. Look for digestive changes, headaches, skin reactions, fatigue, or mood shifts.

Evaluate: If symptoms occur, remove the food again and note it as a potential trigger. If no symptoms arise, it's likely safe to include in your diet.

Repeat with other foods: Gradually reintroduce each eliminated food group, allowing a few days between trials to ensure you get clear results.

What comes next?

If you identify a food sensitivity, you can adjust your diet accordingly to reduce symptoms and inflammation:

Remove or limit trigger foods: If certain foods cause reactions, eliminate them or consume sparingly.

Find suitable substitutions: Swap problem foods for alternatives (such as fortified plant milk instead of dairy, rice instead of grains with gluten in).

Seek expert support: A registered nutritionist or dietitian can help create a balanced eating plan that meets your needs.

If you don't identify any specific triggers, then consider other factors that might be affecting your well-being, such as stress, sleep quality, or underlying health conditions. Regardless of your findings, maintaining a diet that's rich in anti-inflammatory foods like vegetables, berries, oily fish, nuts and seeds can always help.

The elimination diet is a powerful tool for uncovering hidden food sensitivities and regaining control over your health. The process does require discipline and close observation, but the benefits, which may include improved digestion, increased energy, and reduced inflammation, can make the effort worthwhile. It is important that you try to keep your diet as balanced as possible when you are eliminating foods, to ensure that the process does not result in nutritional deficiencies.

Whether you identify specific dietary triggers or simply gain a greater awareness of how food affects your body, this approach can empower you to make informed, long-term dietary choices that improve your overall health and general wellbeing.

> "The elimination diet is a powerful tool for uncovering hidden food sensitivities"

Food sensitivity diary

Not quite sure which foods are triggering symptoms? Track what you eat when you experience discomfort and see if a pattern arises

MEAL/INGREDIENTS	SYMPTOMS	POSSIBLE TRIGGER

Notes

Diets than can help **reduce inflammation**

Words: Rob Hobson

Once you've worked out whether or not you have any food sensitivities, there are many different ways of eating that you can explore along with the anti-inflammatory diet. Here are a few...

The food you eat can have a significant impact on inflammation, either helping to keep it in check or making it worse. Understanding which dietary approaches can help reduce inflammation allows for more informed choices that support long-term health and wellbeing.

Mediterranean Diet

WHAT DOES THIS DIET LOOK LIKE?

The Mediterranean diet is often praised as one of the healthiest ways to eat, thanks to its focus on fresh, wholesome ingredients. Rooted in the traditional eating patterns of countries like Greece, Italy and Spain, this way of eating emphasises nutrient-rich foods that nourish the body and promote long-term health.

WHAT CAN YOU EAT AND WHAT SHOULD YOU AVOID?

The emphasis of this diet is to choose whole, nutrient dense foods while limiting overly processed foods and refined sugars.

Foods to include

- ✓ All fresh fruits and vegetables
- ✓ Whole grains like quinoa, bulgur and whole wheat
- ✓ Legumes, such as lentils and chickpeas
- ✓ All nuts and seeds
- ✓ Extra-virgin olive oil
- ✓ Fatty fish (salmon, sardines, mackerel)
- ✓ All herbs and spices

Foods to avoid

- ✚ All ultra-processed foods and drinks that have been sweetened
- ✚ Highly processed meats, such as sausages, bacon
- ✚ Excessive red meat

HOW DOES THIS DIET HELP FIGHT INFLAMMATION?

The Mediterranean diet helps reduce inflammation with omega-3s from fatty fish, such as salmon and sardines. Extra-virgin olive oil, nuts and colourful fruits and vegetables provide polyphenols and antioxidants to combat oxidative stress. This fibre-rich diet also supports a diverse gut microbiome, crucial for regulating inflammation and immune function.

Dairy-Free Diet

WHAT DOES THIS DIET LOOK LIKE?

A dairy-free diet eliminates all forms of dairy, including milk, cheese, yoghurt, butter and cream. This also excludes products that contain hidden dairy ingredients, such as certain baked goods, sauces and processed foods. Instead, people following this diet turn to plant-based alternatives to milk and yoghurt.

WHAT CAN YOU EAT AND WHAT SHOULD YOU AVOID?

Foods to include

- Plant-based milks, such as nut, soy, oat – ideally fortified with calcium and vitamin D
- Dairy-free yoghurts (coconut and soy-based options)
- Nutrient-dense nuts and seeds, such as almonds, walnuts, chia seeds, flaxseeds
- Fruits and vegetables
- Lean proteins – poultry, fish, eggs, legumes, tofu and tempeh
- Whole grains – quinoa, brown rice, oats, bulgur wheat
- Dairy-free spreads and oils (avocado, olive oil, nut butters)

Foods to avoid

- Cow's milk and products made from it – cheese, butter, cream, yoghurt
- Foods with hidden dairy – many processed snacks, soups, salad dressings
- Whey and casein proteins, which are derived from milk and commonly found in protein powders and some packaged foods

HOW DOES THIS DIET HELP FIGHT INFLAMMATION?

Dairy can trigger inflammation in some people, particularly those with lactose intolerance or sensitivity to casein and whey. Symptoms may include bloating, digestive discomfort and diarrhoea. Some individuals with inflammatory conditions find that eliminating dairy helps reduce symptoms, but this can vary based on personal tolerance and gut health.

Gluten-Free Diet

WHAT DOES THIS DIET LOOK LIKE?

A gluten-free diet excludes all foods made with gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. This means avoiding common staples like bread, pasta, cereals and baked goods unless they're specifically made without gluten. Instead, the focus is on naturally gluten-free whole foods and specially designed gluten-free alternatives.

WHAT CAN YOU EAT AND WHAT SHOULD YOU AVOID?

Foods to include

- Gluten-free grains – quinoa, rice, buckwheat, millet, amaranth, corn
- All fruits and vegetables
- Lean proteins – meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and plant-based proteins such as tofu and legumes
- All nuts and seeds

Foods to avoid

- Grains containing gluten – wheat, including varieties like spelt, barley and rye
- Common gluten-containing foods, such as regular bread, pasta, cereals, baked goods, crackers
- Hidden sources of gluten – sauces, dressings, soy sauce, and even some processed meats

HOW DOES THIS DIET HELP FIGHT INFLAMMATION?

For people with coeliac disease, eating gluten sets off an autoimmune reaction that harms the small intestine, making it harder to absorb nutrients and causing inflammation. Those with non-coeliac gluten sensitivity may also struggle with bloating, fatigue and joint discomfort due to mild inflammation. Removing gluten from the diet can help ease digestive issues and support gut health in these individuals.

However, for those without gluten intolerance, there is little evidence that cutting out gluten reduces inflammation or offers health benefits.

Non-Processed Diet

WHAT DOES THIS DIET LOOK LIKE?

A non-processed diet focuses on eating whole, natural foods while avoiding ultra-processed foods that are high in added sugars, unhealthy fats and artificial additives. This approach prioritises fresh, nutrient-dense ingredients that nourish the body, support gut health and help to maintain overall wellbeing.

WHAT CAN YOU EAT AND WHAT SHOULD YOU AVOID?

Foods to include

- All fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains – brown rice, quinoa, oats, spelt
- Legumes – lentils, beans, chickpeas
- All nuts and seeds
- Fresh meat, fish and seafood
- Healthy fats – avocados, extra-virgin olive oil, oily fish

Foods to avoid

- All ultra-processed foods and drinks
- Processed meats – bacon, sausages and deli meats

HOW DOES THIS DIET HELP FIGHT INFLAMMATION?

Ultra-processed foods often contain ingredients that may contribute to inflammation, such as added sugars and artificial additives. Many UPFs also lack the protective nutrients, fibre and healthy fats found in whole foods, which help regulate inflammation.

Plant-Based Diet

WHAT DOES THIS DIET LOOK LIKE?

A plant-based diet focuses on whole, minimally processed plant foods. It includes a variety of fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole grains. While some people on a plant-based diet still consume small amounts of animal products, others choose to avoid them entirely, following a vegan diet.

WHAT CAN YOU EAT AND WHAT SHOULD YOU AVOID?

Foods to include

- All fruits and vegetables
- Legumes – lentils, chickpeas, beans and peas
- All nuts and seeds
- Whole grains – quinoa, brown rice, oats, barley
- Plant-based milks – nut, soy, oat milk, ideally fortified with calcium and vitamin D

Foods to avoid

- Red meat, poultry, fish and seafood
- All dairy products and eggs

HOW DOES THIS DIET HELP FIGHT INFLAMMATION?

A plant-based diet supports inflammation control with antioxidants, fibre and healthy fats, while reducing pro-inflammatory compounds. Antioxidants in berries, green tea and carrots combat oxidative stress, while fibre promotes gut health and short-chain fatty acid production, reducing inflammation. Choosing nuts, seeds and olive oil over saturated fats from animal products further helps lower inflammatory markers.

Low-Carb Diet

WHAT DOES THIS DIET LOOK LIKE?

A low-carb diet is based on reducing carbohydrate intake while prioritising protein and healthy fats. This approach naturally limits foods that can contribute to blood sugar spikes. Unlike extreme low-carb approaches such as keto, a general low-carb diet can be more flexible, allowing for a moderate intake of slow-releasing carbohydrates from sources like non-starchy vegetables and some legumes.

WHAT CAN YOU EAT AND WHAT SHOULD YOU AVOID?

Foods to include	Foods to avoid
✓ Lean meats – chicken, turkey, lean cuts of beef and lamb	⊕ Foods and drinks high in sugar – cakes, biscuits, sweets, soda
✓ Fatty fish – salmon, sardines, mackerel	⊕ Grains – bread, pasta, rice, cereals
✓ Eggs	⊕ Starchy vegetables – potatoes, sweetcorn, parsnips
✓ Non-starchy vegetables – leafy greens, peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, courgettes	⊕ Highly processed snacks – crisps, processed protein bars
✓ Nuts and seeds – almonds, walnuts, chia seeds, flaxseeds	
✓ Healthy fats – extra-virgin olive oil, avocado, coconut oil	

HOW DOES THIS DIET HELP FIGHT INFLAMMATION?

A low-carb diet has been shown to have anti-inflammatory effects, largely because it helps regulate blood sugar levels. Research has also found that low-carb diets may help reduce levels of C-reactive protein (CRP), a key marker of inflammation in the body. Additionally, by prioritising anti-inflammatory foods such as omega-3-rich fish, nuts, seeds and olive oil, this approach supports overall health while keeping inflammation in check.

Intermittent Fasting

WHAT DOES THIS DIET LOOK LIKE?

Intermittent fasting (IF) focuses on when you eat, alternating between eating and fasting periods to support metabolism and cellular repair. Common methods include 16:8 (fasting for 16 hours, eating within eight), 5:2 (normal eating for five days, restricted intake for two), and alternate day fasting. IF can help regulate hunger, energy levels and inflammation, making it a flexible alternative to traditional diets.

WHAT CAN YOU EAT AND WHAT SHOULD YOU AVOID?

Foods to include	Foods to avoid
✓ All fruit and vegetables	⊕ All ultra-processed foods
✓ High-quality proteins – fish, eggs, poultry, lean meats, tofu, legumes	⊕ Food and drinks high in added sugars
✓ Healthy fats – nuts, seeds, avocado, olive oil, oily fish	
✓ Fibre-rich	

HOW DOES THIS DIET HELP FIGHT INFLAMMATION?

Intermittent fasting (IF) may help reduce inflammation by triggering autophagy, a process where the body removes damaged cells and reduces oxidative stress. Research suggests IF can lower inflammatory markers like C-reactive protein (CRP) and IL-6, which are linked to chronic diseases. IF may also benefit gut health by giving the digestive system a break and supporting a more diverse gut microbiome.

Reducing inflammation through diet involves choosing whole, nutrient-dense foods and avoiding processed, pro-inflammatory ingredients.

TOP 20 FOODS to fight inflammation

Want to know which ingredients will help to supercharge your anti-inflammatory diet? Here are 20 to add to your shopping list...

Words: Charlie Watson

Blueberries

Blueberries have the highest antioxidant supply of all fresh fruit. Some studies have shown that anthocyanin, the main antioxidant found in blueberries, can help to fight heart disease.

Serving suggestion: 4 heaped tbsp.

Best way to eat: fresh or frozen.

How to add to your diet: add to yoghurts, porridge, desserts, smoothies, or savoury dishes like salads, BBQ sauces and meat dishes.

Sardines

Another great source of omega-3 fatty acids. Our bodies break down fatty acids into compounds called resolvins and protectins that help manage inflammation by limiting inflammatory response.

Serving suggestion: 1-2 portions of oily fish per week (about 140g).

Best way to cook: pan fry, grill or bake with lemon or something acidic to balance the rich, fatty flavours.

How to add to your diet: tinned sardines are a great cupboard staple to add to pasta dishes, toast or salad.

Dark leafy green veg

Leafy greens – including spinach, kale and spring greens – that contain a plethora of antioxidants, including vitamins A, C and K, protect cells from free radical damage.

Serving suggestion: 4 heaped tbsp.

Best way to cook: steaming or microwaving protects the nutrients compared to boiling (unless you use the cooking water).

How to add to your diet: stir into soups, salads, stews, salads and even smoothies. Spinach freezes really well and can be used directly from frozen to save you having a soggy bag in your fridge.

Extra-Virgin Olive Oil

Studies have shown that oleic acid, the main fatty acid found in olive oil, has anti-inflammatory properties and has been found to reduce C-reactive Protein. Additionally, olive oil is packed with biologically active antioxidants, the key being oleocanthal that has been shown to work similarly to ibuprofen.

Serving suggestion: 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil – extra-virgin has the highest amount of polyphenols and antioxidants.

Best way to cook: olive oil has a relatively low smoke point compared to other cooking oils, so it may be best to use it raw.

How to add to your diet: use in salad dressings, drizzle on soups, pastas, pizza, meats, fish or even in desserts if you want to try out something new.

Green Tea

This herbal tea is packed full of antioxidants, the main polyphenol is called epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGGG). It can reduce the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines, and suppress the expression of certain genes and proteins that are a cause of inflammation.

Serving suggestion: no more than 8 cups per day.

Best way to drink: steep the tea for 1-2 minutes.

How to add to your diet: swap out a cup of coffee or black tea for green tea instead – but watch out for the caffeine content!

Almonds

Almonds are one of the best sources of vitamin E that has been linked to lower rates of heart disease, Alzheimer's and cancer, plus they are a good source of antioxidants.

Serving suggestion: 60g or roughly 46 raw almonds.

Best way to consume: most of the antioxidants in almonds are found in the brown layer of skin, so blanched almonds have lower anti-inflammatory properties.

How to add to your diet: eat as a snack alongside a protein source such as cheese or yoghurt, chop and add to salads, blend into soups or smoothies.

Broccoli

Broccoli is particularly high in the antioxidant sulforaphane. This fights inflammation in the body by reducing levels of cytokines and NF-kB, a key mediator of inflammatory responses. NF-kB is increasingly being seen as playing a crucial role in cancer initiation and progression.

Serving suggestion: 75g broccoli.

Best way to cook: steaming your veg maintains the most nutrients within the veg.

How to add to your diet: add it into stir-fries, soups, salads, smoothies or eat raw with a dip.

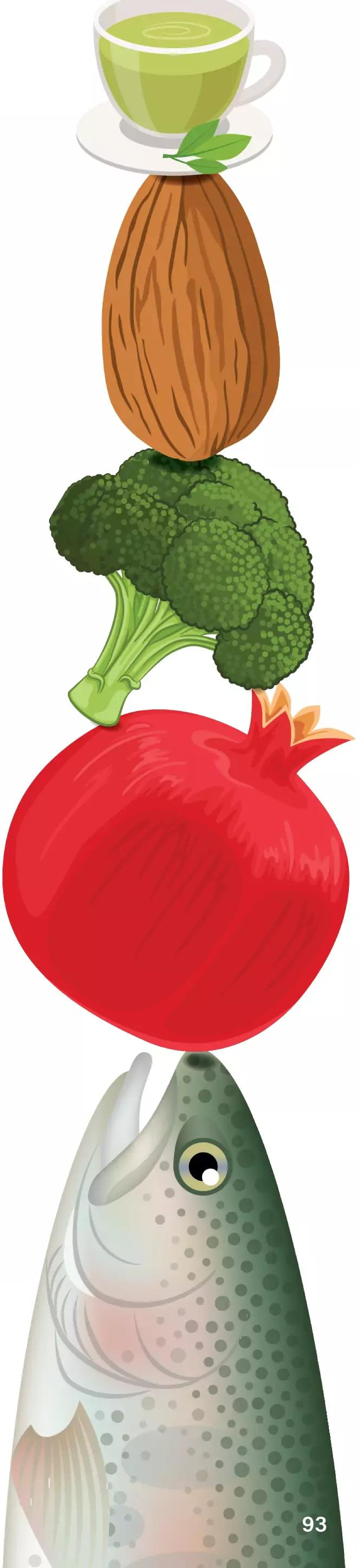
Trout

As an oily fish, trout is a good dietary source of omega-3 fatty acids. A recent study found that omega-3 can reduce inflammation by increasing the concentration of special molecule mediators that regulate specific compounds in the blood.

Serving suggestion: 1-2 portions of oily fish per week (140g).

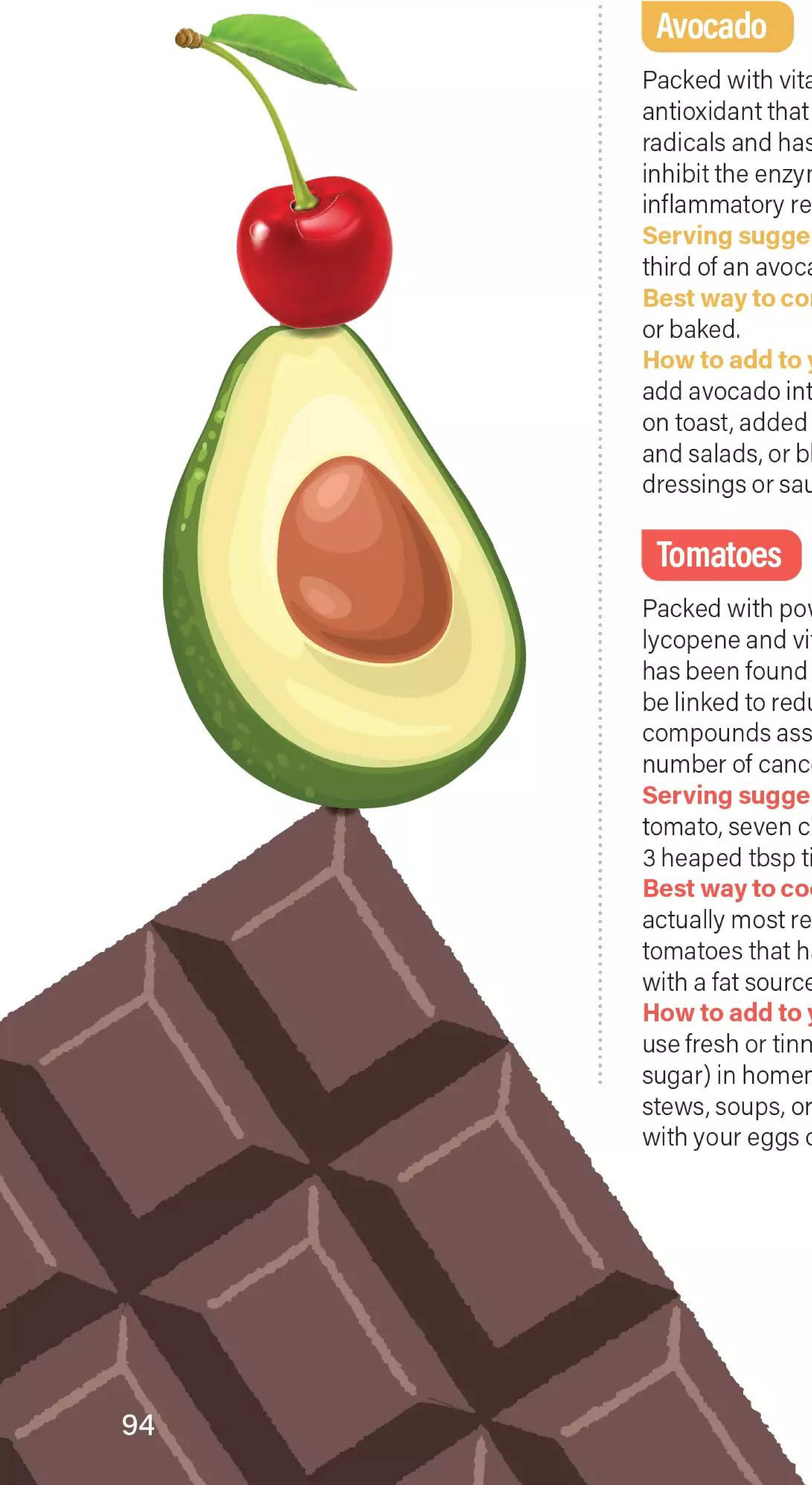
Best way to cook: steamed, roasted, pan-fried, baked or smoked.

How to add to your diet: use it in traybakes, salads, stir-fries, or stirred into risottos or pasta dishes.



Cherries

A good source of polyphenols and vitamin C, studies have shown that consumption of sweet or tart cherries can reduce inflammation by preventing/reducing oxidative stress.
Serving suggestion: studies included very high levels of intake for anti-inflammatory benefits, which are unrealistic for day-to-day life, but a standard portion is 14 cherries.
Best way to cook: eat fresh or frozen, dried or cherry juice – just not maraschino cherries, which are full of added sugar.
How to add to your diet: add them to salads, porridge, smoothies, desserts or drinks, or make cherry jam or compote.



Dark Chocolate

Dark chocolate contains flavonoids and antioxidants. The flavonoids in dark chocolate can help maintain the health of endothelial cells (the cells that line the arteries). Antioxidants interact with free radicals from the body cells and neutralise the damage caused by oxidation.
Serving suggestion: 20g of 70 per cent dark chocolate.
Best way to consume: melted or eat it as is.
How to add to your diet: enjoy with a portion of fruit, Greek yoghurt, or made into hot chocolate. Try to avoid having it too close to bedtime, as its caffeine content can disrupt your sleep.

Avocado

Packed with vitamin E, a potent antioxidant that neutralises free radicals and has been shown to inhibit the enzyme involved with inflammatory reactions.
Serving suggestion: 50g – about a third of an avocado.
Best way to consume: eaten raw or baked.
How to add to your diet: add avocado into burgers, smashed on toast, added to sandwiches and salads, or blended into salad dressings or sauces.

Tomatoes

Packed with powerful antioxidants lycopene and vitamin C. Lycopene has been found in several studies to be linked to reducing inflammatory compounds associated with a number of cancers.
Serving suggestion: One medium tomato, seven cherry tomatoes, 3 heaped tbsp tinned tomatoes.
Best way to cook: lycopene is actually most readily available from tomatoes that have been cooked with a fat source.
How to add to your diet: use fresh or tinned (with no added sugar) in homemade pasta sauces, stews, soups, or have it for breakfast with your eggs on toast.

Pistachios

These nuts are full of antioxidants, particularly lutein and zeaxanthin that are important for eye health. These compounds help protect our eyes from blue light damage and age-related macular degeneration. They also contain polyphenols and tocopherols that may help protect us from heart disease and cancer.
Serving suggestion: 30g – roughly 50 pistachios.
Best way to consume: eating them unpeeled and unsalted is the healthiest form.
How to add to your diet: add to yoghurts, porridges, mix into cakes and muffins, pestos and in other pasta dishes.

Pomegranate

Pomegranates contain the potent polyphenol ellagitannins found in both the peel and seeds. These antioxidants help reduce build up of cholesterol and plaque in our blood vessels, and prevent thickening of artery walls. Early studies have found that the antioxidants in pomegranate may help to prevent some cancers.
Serving suggestion: half a fresh pomegranate or 150ml juice.
Best way to consume: juiced or whole.
How to add to your diet: drink a portion of juice, sprinkle pomegranate seeds on your yoghurt, porridge, salads or meat dishes.

Chia Seeds

Chia seeds are packed with alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), an essential omega-3 fatty acid that the body cannot produce on its own and therefore needs to be consumed from the foods we eat.
Serving suggestion: 2½ tbsp, which also provides 10g fibre.
Best way to cook: soak them to make them more easily digestible and some nutrients more bio-available. Soak for between 30 minutes and 2 hours before eating – you can store soaked chia seeds in the fridge for up to 5 days.
How to add to your diet: soak in coconut milk to make chia pudding, add to porridge, granola, baked goods, smoothies, fruit salads or even just to plain water for a hydration boost.

Salmon

Wild salmon is one of the most anti-inflammatory foods you can consume. Salmon is packed with omega-3 fatty acids that have been associated with reductions in levels of C-reactive protein, a key inflammatory marker.
Serving suggestion: one to two portions of oily fish per week (about 140g).
Best way to cook: poached, steamed, roasted, smoked or raw (sushi grade only).
How to add to your diet: Using hot smoked or poached salmon fillets is a quick and easy way to add it to salads, risottos and pastas. Smoked salmon is a great addition to breakfast or lunch.

Oranges

Oranges and their juice contain a flavonoid called narirutin, a type of polyphenol that may help to lower cholesterol and reduce obesity risk. They contain vitamin C, an antioxidant that can modulate the DNA binding action of NF-kB, which is involved with inflammation development and progress in the body.
Serving suggestion: one large orange, two small satsuma, 150ml fresh orange juice.
Best way to consume: fresh (not juice from concentrate).
How to add to your diet: add it to yoghurt, salads, dressings, baking, smoothies, or enjoy as a snack with a portion of protein. Vitamin C also helps absorption of iron, so try adding some orange juice to your next beef dish!

Strawberries

Strawberries contain a number of polyphenol compounds, such as anthocyanins and ellagic acid, known to have anti-inflammatory effects. Studies have linked increased berry consumption with lower risk of diabetes, heart disease and Alzheimer's.
Serving suggestion: a portion is about 7 strawberries.
Best way to consume: eating them fresh maximises fibre intake.
How to add to your diet: add to yoghurt, porridge, smoothies, salads or even make them into a strawberry soup.

Turmeric

The main active ingredient in turmeric is curcumin, a polyphenol with both antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that neutralise free radicals and can shield cells from damage.
Serving suggestion: ½-1½ tsp dried root powder.
Best way to cook: as fresh turmeric root or dried powdered turmeric – there isn't enough evidence on the safety or effectiveness of turmeric supplements, so stick with adding it to your food/drinks for now.
How to add to your diet: make a cup of turmeric herbal tea, add it to curries, soups, smoothies and salad dressings.

Walnuts

Walnuts are the only nut that provides a significant source of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), a precursor to the omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA found in oily fish. Researchers found they lower C-reactive protein, an inflammatory marker linked to increased risk of cardiovascular disease and arthritis.
Serving suggestion: because of their high fat content, the British Heart Foundation (BHF) recommend limiting serving sizes to 30g.
How to add to your diet: stir them into porridge, overnight oats, baked goods such as muffins or banana bread, or add them to veggie side dishes or salads.

10 foods that cause inflammation

Words: Charlie Watson

We know the best ingredients for helping to heal inflammation, but which ones should you avoid from the start? We reveal all...

Sugar-sweetened drinks

Often we don't count drinks into calories and sugar intake and yet they can be the biggest contributor to added sugar in our diet. Sugar-sweetened drinks are consistently linked to an increased risk of numerous inflammatory conditions, including cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

✓ **Swap for:** Naturally flavoured sparkling water, fresh fruit juices (one small glass per day).

Alcohol

When alcohol is metabolised by the body, toxic compounds are produced and these can cause damage to the liver, gut and other organs, causing an inflammatory response. Additionally, drinking alcohol can harm gut health by reducing the production of anti-inflammatory bacteria.

✓ **Swap for:** non-alcoholic alternatives including beer, spirits and wines, sparkling water, fruit juices.

Trans fats

Trans fats are created by food manufacturers through hydrogenation, changing a food's texture and consistency and increasing shelf stability. There is no recommended safe level of trans fats in our diet.

Consuming trans fats has been found to increase levels of (bad) LDL cholesterol and reduce levels of (good) HDL cholesterol – increasing risk of developing heart disease.

Look out for hydrogenated oils or partially hydrogenated oils on the label as this indicates the presence of trans fats. These are found particularly in manufactured baked goods, margarine, crackers and microwave popcorn

✓ **Swap for:** homemade baking, avocado oil, olive oil, choose whole foods.

Ultra-Processed Foods

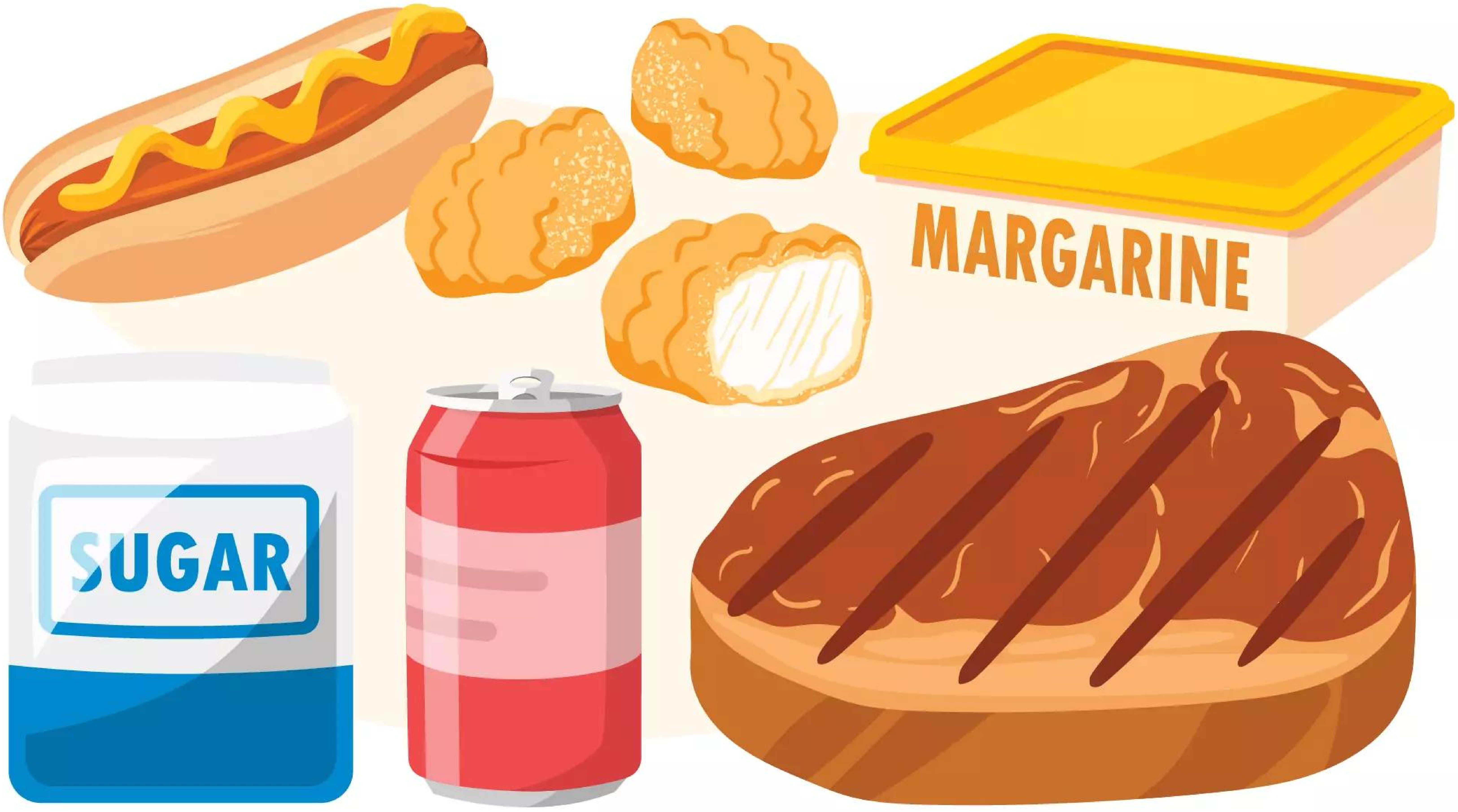
Commonly referred to as UPFs, Ultra-Processed Foods are industrially formulated products with synthetic ingredients. Diets that are high in UPFs have been linked to an increased risk of inflammation, including higher rates of inflammatory bowel disease, colorectal cancer and irritable bowel disease.

✓ **Swap for:** minimally processed or whole foods.

Deep Fried Foods

Fried foods often have higher levels of omega-6 fatty acids and trans fats – both of which increase inflammation within the body. When certain foods are cooked at high temperatures, harmful advanced glycation end products (AGEs) are produced – they are formed when fat or protein combine with sugar in the bloodstream. High levels of AGEs are associated with oxidative stress and inflammation, leading to increased rates of diabetes, heart disease, Alzheimer's and premature ageing.

✓ **Swap for:** try air-frying, oven baking, pan or stir-frying, or steaming.



Refined Carbs

These are carbohydrates that have been milled, removing the fibrous bran and germ, such as white bread, white rice, sugary cereals, white flour, pastries. Studies have found that diets higher in refined carbohydrates can increase inflammatory mediators and trigger insulin resistance (increasing rates of diabetes).

✓ **Swap for:** whole grain options including wild or whole grain rice, brown or lentil pasta, whole grain bread, potatoes, oats, wholewheat flour. Aim for at least half of your grains to be whole grain.

Artificial Sweeteners

Artificial sweeteners have been replacing real sugars to reduce calories in snacks and drinks among other products. Some small studies revealed exacerbated gut damage and inflammation, while some experts believe that artificial sweeteners can alter normal metabolism, the gut microbiome and blood vessels that could promote high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and unhealthy cholesterol levels. As use of artificial sweeteners increases and new products are released, more research is needed into the relationship between these 'fake sugars' and the incidence of inflammation.

✓ **Swap for:** naturally occurring sugars or natural sweeteners like honey and maple syrup that may have antioxidant benefits.

Added Sugar

Sugar is added to a plethora of food products, from baked goods, ice-creams and sugary drinks, to kids' yoghurt, baked beans, bread and pasta sauces. This can be in the form of cane sugar, dextrose, maltose and high fructose corn syrup – it's important to check the back of packaging for ingredients lists and nutritional values.

Excessive sugar consumption is widely associated with impaired immune function and chronic inflammation. Sugar intake stimulates the fatty acids in the liver, the compounds created when the body digests these fatty acids can trigger inflammatory processes.

✓ **Swap for:** naturally sweetened items, homemade products, check the food labels to choose options without added sugar.

Processed Meats

Studies have shown increased consumption of processed meats have a great risk of all-cause mortality and cardiovascular mortality than fish and unprocessed meat. The World Cancer Research Fund recommends limiting processed meat intake due to its link to colorectal cancers.

✓ **Swap for:** fish, poultry, unprocessed meat options, meat-free alternatives.

Red Meat

This includes beef, lamb, veal, pork, mutton and goat meat and is due to increased levels of saturated fats compared to other meat sources. Recent studies have found that BMI had a big impact on inflammatory response to red meat, and that red meat alone did not impact C-reactive protein (CRP), a key indicator of inflammation in the body.

The World Cancer Research Fund is recommending that people eat red meat no more than three times per week, and consume less than 500g cooked/700g raw red meat per week to reduce the risk of colorectal cancer.

✓ **Swap for:** fish, poultry and meat alternatives.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY FOOD SWAPS

Words: Rob Hobson

You don't have to avoid all your favourite foods when following an anti-inflammatory diet, just swap to healthier versions...

MILK CHOCOLATE

DARK CHOCOLATE

Dark chocolate has a higher cocoa content than milk chocolate, meaning it's rich in antioxidant flavonoids that can help to reduce inflammation.

CRISPS

HOMEMADE VEGETABLE CRISPS

Crisps are high in saturated fat that can contribute to inflammation in the body. Switching to homemade vegetable crisps means you can use olive oil, as well as getting the nutritional benefit of vegetables like beetroot and parsnips.

GRANOLA BAR

A HANDFUL OF NUTS AND RAISINS

These bars are notoriously high in refined sugars that can contribute to inflammation, unlike nuts and raisins.

WHITE PASTA

WHOLEMEAL PASTA

White pasta is quickly broken down into glucose and that then triggers a more extreme insulin response from the body and results in an increased level of pro-inflammatory markers.

SUGARY BREAKFAST CEREAL

HOMEMADE GRANOLA

Many breakfast cereals are high in sugar (even the 'healthier' ones), so make your own granola using oats, nuts, dried fruit and a small amount of honey.

BUTTER

AVOCADO

Butter is high in saturated fat and can increase levels of bad cholesterol, which is associated with increased inflammation. Blitz the avocado down to use as an alternative spread.

FRUIT CRUMBLE WITH CUSTARD

GRILLED PEACHES TOPPED WITH NUTS, SEEDS AND YOGHURT

Fruit crumbles can be made healthily but are often loaded with sugar, unlike grilled fruits topped with yoghurt.

PROCESSED LUNCHEON HAM

FRESH COOKED CHICKEN BREAST SLICES

Processed meats are high in nitrates that can be converted into harmful nitrosamines associated with inflammation, so switch them for fresh cooked chicken breast slices.

SUGARY SOFT DRINKS/SODAS

SPARKLING WATER WITH FRUIT OR CUCUMBER

Many soft drinks and sodas can contain almost 10 tsp of sugar, so switch them out in favour of sparkling water and fruit with zero added sugar.

DOUBLE CREAM/HEAVY CREAM

LOW-FAT GREEK YOGHURT

Double cream is rich in saturated fat that can increase bad cholesterol – associated with inflammation – so switch to low-fat Greek yoghurt that makes a perfect healthy alternative.

ICE CREAM

FROZEN BANANA ICE CREAM

Ice cream is high in sugar and saturated fat, both of which are associated with inflammation. So switch to frozen bananas blitzed in a food processor for a natural alternative (add raw cacao powder for a chocolate version).

GAMMON STEAK

LEAN GRILLED BEEF FILLET STEAK

Cooking processed meat at high temperatures can lead to the formation of heterocyclic amines that can exacerbate inflammation, so switch to grilled fillet of beef instead.

FRIED CHIPS

BAKED SWEET POTATO WEDGES

Fried chips are loaded with saturated fat, and the situation is made worse if the cooking fat has been used before. Switch to baked sweet potato wedges, which are high in antioxidant carotenoids.

DEEP FRIED WHITE FISH IN BATTER

GRILLED SALMON FILLET

Deep fried fish is high in saturated fat and highly refined white flour, both of which are associated with inflammation, so switch to a grilled salmon fillet, rich in anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids.

FRUIT YOGHURT

YOGHURT BLENDED WITH FROZEN BERRIES

Fruit yoghurt may seem healthy, but it can have high amounts of added sugar, so switch to plain low-fat yoghurt blitzed with berries for a lower sugar alternative.

The **anti-inflammatory** food pyramid

This food pyramid gives you a good idea of how to incorporate healthy foods into your diet to reduce inflammation and provide the energy and nutrition you need on a daily basis

HEALTHY TREATS

(such as dark chocolate)

Weekly

GREEN OR WHITE TEA

2-4 cups daily

SUPPLEMENTS

As directed

HERBS AND SPICES

Unlimited

HEALTHY FATS AND OILS

Organic where possible

2-3 servings daily

OTHER PROTEINS

Tofu, poultry, eggs and dairy etc

3-5 servings weekly

NUTS AND SEEDS

Eat a mixture and organic where possible

3-6 servings daily

WHOLE GRAINS AND LEGUMES

Eat a mixture and organic where possible

2-5 servings daily

SEAFOOD

Salmon, sardines etc

4-7 servings weekly, on a Mediterranean diet

FRUITS

In-season, organic (where possible), predominantly low GI and a variety of colours

2-4 servings daily

VEGETABLES

Eat a rainbow of colours (for variety), raw and cooked, in-season and organic where possible

5-8 servings daily

30 DAYS TO

STAY UP TO DATE!

30 DAYS TO
Anti-Inflammatory Diet
Your day-by-day guide to healing and nourishing your body
NEW!
BUILD HEALTHY NEW HABITS to ease your inflammation
Including 30 ANTI-INFLAMMATORY RECIPES
Flavours of the Mediterranean
Top foods to calm chronic pain
Make the most of turmeric
Help your body to heal with protein

Make sure you're the first to hear about each new issue of ***30 Days*** as they're published.

We're here to help you invest in yourself!

Go to tinyurl.com/30DaysMag

or scan the QR code to sign up

Terms & conditions: By signing up you are agreeing to receive emails from Anthem Publishing. You can unsubscribe from these emails at any time.

6 BONUS HEALTHY HABITS

to help keep inflammation at bay

Words: Rachel Ifans

You've discovered 30 healthy habits now, but we couldn't resist giving you a few more. Some may apply to you, some might not, but all will help you to maintain an anti-inflammatory lifestyle

1 MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT

There is a direct link between obesity and chronic inflammation, with the two forming a vicious cycle. Obesity fuels the inflammation, and the inflammation causes obesity through increased leptin in the blood stream, which stops your body realising that it's had enough to eat. This means that keeping to a healthy weight is a really important part of keeping inflammation under control.

As we all know, that can be easier said than done. The key is to start slowly and gradually increase exercise and lifestyle changes that you can stick to, rather than going for a crash diet. Exercise and a good diet go hand in hand in maintaining a healthy weight, and they'll make you feel better and, of course, help lower inflammation. If the going gets tough, don't forget that inflammation is often the problem, not your will power!

2 GIVE UP SMOKING

If you're a smoker, every cigarette you puff causes inflammation throughout your body. The more cigarettes and the longer you smoke for, the greater the inflammation will be.

Cigarette smoke contains thousands of toxins and cancer-causing chemicals. These cause your body to release inflammatory proteins called cytokines, which trigger an inflammatory response all over the body, not just in the lungs.

We all know by now that smoking causes cancer, particularly lung cancer, but it is also linked to dozens of other serious conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, heart disease, strokes, asthma and diabetes. The good news is that inflammation starts reducing quickly when you stop smoking and you'll start feeling the benefits in just a few days. What's more, research shows that inflammation levels will gradually reduce back to your baseline within five years.

If you're thinking about giving up, why not try the free NHS app available from *nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking*.

3 LOOK AFTER YOUR TEETH

Inflammation is a key factor in gum disease. When plaque builds up on your teeth, it irritates the gums, causing them to become inflamed. This makes them prone to infection, from mild gingivitis to severe periodontitis, with symptoms including painful, swollen and bleeding gums, receding gums and eventually loose teeth. What's more, studies show that people with diseased gums are more likely to develop dementia.

The best approach to stop inflammation in your gums is prevention. Brush your teeth at least twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and spit, don't rinse. Use interdental brushes or floss to clean between your teeth and visit your dentist regularly for check-ups and cleanings. In terms of lifestyle, it's best to eat a healthy diet without too much sugar and you should definitely avoid smoking, which is a major risk factor for gum disease.

5 GO RAW

We've already discovered that the best ways to harness the power of vegetables to keep inflammation at bay turns out to be fast but gentle – quick cooking using gentle methods – but did you know that you get the most benefit (and a good crunch) from some vegetables if you eat them raw? This doesn't apply across the cutting board however. Raw tomatoes, for example, can be delicious and healthy, but cooking them boosts the amount of lycopene, which is a potent antioxidant that lowers your risk of cancer and heart attacks.

When it comes down to it, the main thing is to make sure we eat a variety of vegetables – and plenty of them!

4 GIVE YOUR HOME A SPRING CLEAN

Did you know that dust and mould lurking in your home can be more than just unsightly and irritating – they can actually cause inflammation?

If your home has black mould, you are more likely to suffer from respiratory illnesses, infections and allergies. Mould loves moisture, so rooms that suffer from condensation problems are often where it first appears. Remove it with a cloth that you throw away afterwards, then wipe down the area with a fungicidal wash (following the instructions carefully, of course). It's important to wear gloves and a face mask when removing mould. To stop it coming back, you'll need to fix the moisture problem.

Dust isn't quite as bad, but if you're allergic to the mites that love household dust, you can experience allergic reactions such as asthma, eczema and rhinitis. Luckily, when you remove the dust, you remove the mites, so vacuuming and washing your bedding regularly should go a long way to fixing the problem.

6 NATURAL CLEANING AND BEAUTY WARES

Every day, we use beauty and cleaning products without knowing what's in them. Particularly if you suffer from skin inflammation, making your own versions can be a quick and easy way to use ingredients that you know won't exacerbate the problem. People have been cleaning things for thousands of years, well before the advent of colourful bottles of sprays, so we know what works well. Two stand-out cleaners are white vinegar, a natural disinfectant that's great for getting rid of gummy build-ups and hard water stains, and bicarbonate of (baking) soda, which is great for absorbing bad odours, as well as sprinkling on a damp cloth to use as a surface cleaner.

To make beauty products, why not start with a honey mask? Rub warm honey on your face and leave it for 30 minutes. Simple. To remove oils from hair, mix one part white vinegar with five parts water and rinse your hair with it after washing out the shampoo.

6 ways to sleep easy

Words: Louise Pyne

Discover the signs of sleep-induced inflammation and follow our six-point plan to reset your nightly routine

There are the outward signs of poor sleep that we all know – dark, puffy circles, erratic moods, low energy and dwindling concentration levels - but then there are the inflammatory effects that sleep debt is causing havoc with on your insides.

Inflammation is a two-way street when it comes to sleep disturbances, because not only does poor sleep trigger inflammation, inflammation also causes poor sleep. Even if you're relatively able to function on just a few hours' sleep, unless you obtain those quality eight hours on a regular basis, your health may suffer.

How common are problems with sleeping?

Sleep problems are very common in the UK, with one in two people confessing that they get less than six hours sleep per night. Interestingly, women are twice as likely to suffer insomnia than men, as a result of having too much on their plates, high anxiety levels and a complicated medley of fluctuating hormones all thrown into the mix.

"Poor sleep, whether due to insufficient duration or poor quality, can lead to chronic low-grade inflammation, increasing the risk of various health issues, including metabolic disorders, cardiovascular disease and autoimmune conditions," explains Dominika Blonska, a hormone health and fitness expert and qualified nurse (*definebydom.com*).

The dangers of missing sleep

During deep sleep, the body releases anti-inflammatory cytokines that help regulate immune responses. A lack of sleep disrupts this balance, increasing pro-inflammatory cytokines that can disrupt immunity, making you more susceptible to illness. Sleep also helps to regulate levels of the stress hormone cortisol, and an inconsistent sleep schedule can result in elevated levels of cortisol.

"Cortisol helps control inflammation and follows a natural daily rhythm. Poor sleep disrupts this cycle, leading to higher baseline inflammation," adds Blonska.

It's a double-edged sword – the more stressed you are, the less you'll sleep, and the fewer hours of sleep you get, the more stressed you feel.

There's more... A lack of restorative sleep, (known as REM sleep) raises oxidative stress and impairs cellular repair mechanisms, contributing to inflammation and tissue damage.

These are all danger traps that you can fall into. Even if you are getting the recommended eight hours of sleep it's paramount to consider how much restorative sleep you are getting, because it's not just about sleep quantity, but also about quality.

Signs you might not be getting enough deep-sleep hours include waking up feeling unrefreshed with brain fog and a grogginess that doesn't lift throughout the day. Recurrent bouts of illness or taking longer to heal than usual is also a warning sign to watch out for as this indicates a weakened immune system. Sleep helps to regulate levels of the appetite hormone ghrelin and the satiety hormone leptin. When this finely tuned balance is out of whack you might suffer from cravings – especially for sugary and high carbohydrate foods. Thankfully there are lots of steps you can take to help improve sleep while minimising any inflammatory effects.

6 micro-habits for *better sleep*

Sleep-proof your routine with these easy to implement tips

1 BE CONSISTENT

Our bodies run off a 24-hour sleep-awake cycle that affects every cell, tissue and organ in the body. Your body naturally knows that you should be sleeping during the night hours and as a consequence, levels of the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin increase to help lull you into a sleepy state.

"Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day (even weekends) helps regulate your circadian rhythm, (and melatonin levels) making it easier to fall asleep and wake up naturally," says Dominika Blonska.

It's important to know that the odd lie-in won't help catch up on built-up sleep debt. It's better to tweak your daily schedule instead of burning the candle at both ends and hoping to make up the hours at the weekend.

2 REDUCE BLUE LIGHT EXPOSURE

Bedtime is the worst time of day to sit scrolling through social media or think about juggling work deadlines. "Blue light from phones, TVs and tablets suppresses melatonin, the sleep hormone. Try using blue light-blocking glasses or avoiding screens at least 60 minutes before bed," says Blonska. Better still, set a no-phone in the bedroom rule so you're not tempted to reach for one when you should be dropping off.

3 RE-THINK YOUR SLEEP HYGIENE

Make an extra effort to structure your evening so that you have some free time before you hit the hay. "Engage in calming activities before bed, such as reading, journalling, stretching, or deep breathing exercises. These all help signal to your body that it's time to wind down," explains Blonska.

A warm candlelit bath with lavender oil can feel heavenly after a long day, and soothing your senses is a great way to lull yourself into a peaceful slumber.

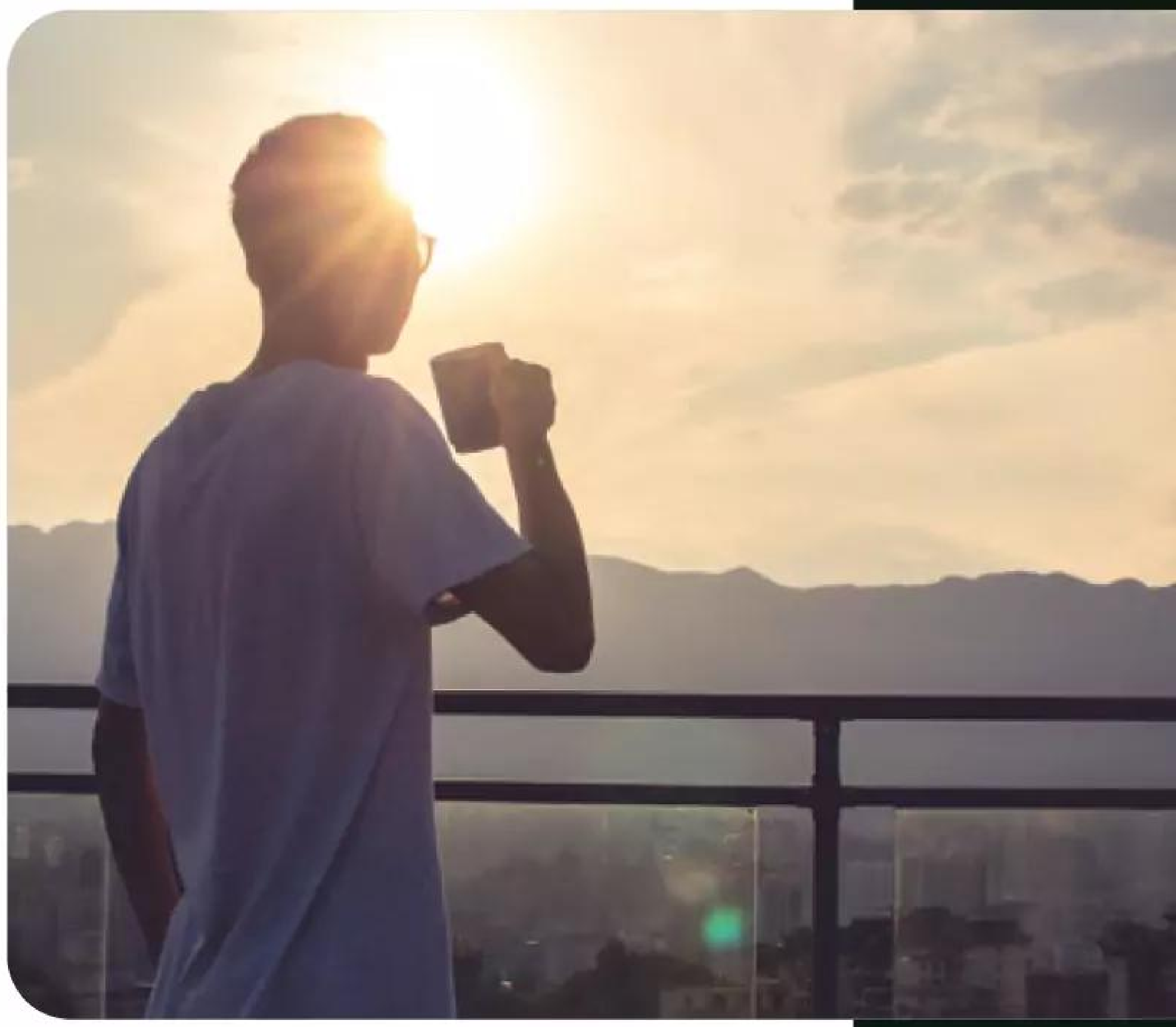
4 AVOID EVENING STIMULANTS

A cup of coffee might be one of the only things that gets you going in the morning, but caffeine-fuelled drinks (not just coffee, but also tea, caffeinated sports drinks and fizzy drinks) can impair nighttime sleep as their effects last for hours after your last sip. "Caffeine can stay in your system for hours, disrupting sleep, so it's best to avoid it at least six hours before bedtime to ensure the effects don't interfere with your sleep cycle," says Blonska.

Switch to decaffeinated tea and coffee and herbal tea varieties such as chamomile and lemon balm, instead of green tea and a builder's brew, for their naturally calming and stress-relieving properties.

5 PRIORITISE MORNING SUNLIGHT EXPOSURE

Make sure that exposing your skin to natural sunlight is one of the first things you do upon waking to help reset your circadian rhythm. Take a leisurely walk around your garden (barefoot if possible to help engage with nature), or relax by a sunlit windowsill for five to ten minutes each morning. "Natural light exposure early in the day helps regulate your body's internal clock and supports melatonin production at night," maintains Blonska. You'll be surprised at the difference it makes.



6 CHANGE YOUR DIET

The micro decisions that you make about what you put into your body can have a profound effect on your sleep. Include more sleep-inducing foods in your daily diet, such as turkey, bananas, oats and dairy products. These are all rich in the neurotransmitter tryptophan, which is needed to create the sleep hormone melatonin. Avoid spicy, fried food at night as this can place a toll on your digestive system, making it harder to fall asleep. It's also a good idea to leave at least two to three hours between your last meal of the day and heading off to bed to avoid any abdominal discomfort.

What's the link between stress and inflammation?

Words: Zoe Miller

We all know that stress isn't good for us, but can it actually cause harm to our bodies? We explore the link between stress and inflammation

You've probably heard that stress has a physical effect on the body. Stress can trigger the body's fight-or-flight pathway – which is useful when you are in imminent danger and need to fight for your life, but less so when you're snowed under at work or home.

Long-term, this fight-or-flight response can weaken your immune system and lead to a whole host of physical symptoms like high blood pressure and stomach problems.

Although the exact link isn't yet well understood, some of the effects that stress has on the body are related to inflammation.

The science behind stress and inflammation

Inflammation is the way your body defends itself against a threat. It's a natural response from the immune system that helps the body fight off invaders and to heal itself, but unfortunately it can be a bad thing if it goes on for too long.

If you cut yourself, it's normal for your body to respond with inflammation around the cut. Cells in your immune system release chemicals to communicate danger to other cells, which in turn causes swelling, redness, and even some pain. These are all good things that promote healing and stop toxins from spreading further into your body.

However, stress leads to a different

> "Stress is a part of life, but feeling stressed all the time isn't inevitable."

type of inflammation. Stress doesn't just activate inflammation at the sight of a wound or infection, it leads to body-wide inflammation, including in the brain.

This inflammation is mostly due to the way stress affects the immune system, but it's a little more complicated than that. Stress activates other bodily responses that are needed in an emergency that may also promote inflammation.

Imagine being chased by a tiger. To escape, you'd need to be alert and have the power in your muscles to run away or fight the tiger. The acute stress in this situation leads to a physical response from the body. Your heart rate, blood sugar and blood pressure all increase to give your muscles and brain the energy they need to deal with the situation. Once the tiger is gone, you're no longer stressed, and your body should return to normal.

The problem lies with chronic, or long-term, stress when your body doesn't return to normal.

Dealing with chronic stress and long-term inflammation

Modern life doesn't often involve being chased by a tiger, but it is full of many different types of stress.

When you're stressed for a long period of time, the body doesn't have a chance to recover and keeps responding in a way that promotes inflammation. Your immune cells continue to create inflammation-inducing chemicals rather than responding normally to pathogens or cancerous cells.

Not only does this mean the immune system is less effective at fighting off illnesses, but it can also trigger stress-related diseases. Other parts of a chronic stress response, such as high blood sugar, blood pressure and stress hormone levels, can also contribute.

Together, this combination of chronic stress and inflammation may lead to heart disease, diabetes, depression, autoimmune diseases or even certain types of cancer, although more research is needed for us to fully understand the specifics.

Yes, this might sound scary, but the good news is there are plenty of ways

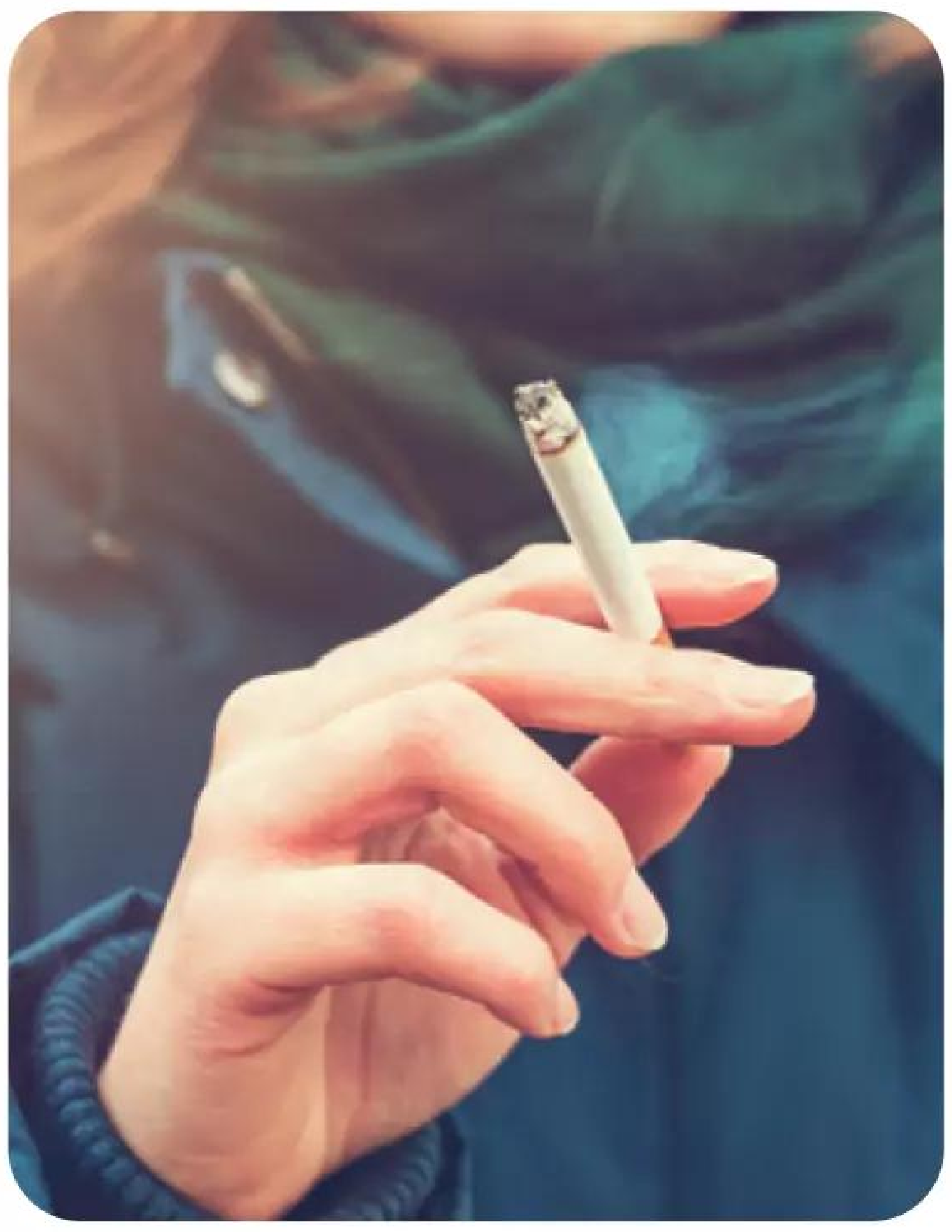
6 simple ways to reduce stress

Build a support network

Whether that's family, friends or colleagues, research suggests that having a good support network makes it easier to manage stress.

Avoid these unhealthy habits

Some people turn to smoking, binge eating, alcohol, or other drugs as ways to deal with their stress. Try to find healthier ways to cope, as these habits can lead to more problems in the long run.



Take time to relax

Taking a moment to relax helps you to refocus away from the cause of your stress. Find whatever works for you, whether that's a few minutes reading a book, spending time with a pet, or something more structured like mindfulness.

to manage your stress and to reduce your risk.

How managing stress can improve your health

Stress is a part of life, but feeling stressed all the time isn't inevitable. When we're stressed, it can be even harder to find the time for stress-management, but this is the time we need to focus on it the most.

One of the most effective ways to manage stress is through regular exercise. Many scientific studies have found that physical exercise helps protect against chronic inflammatory diseases and reduce inflammation. The benefits don't end with your physical health – exercise can also boost emotional resilience and mood.

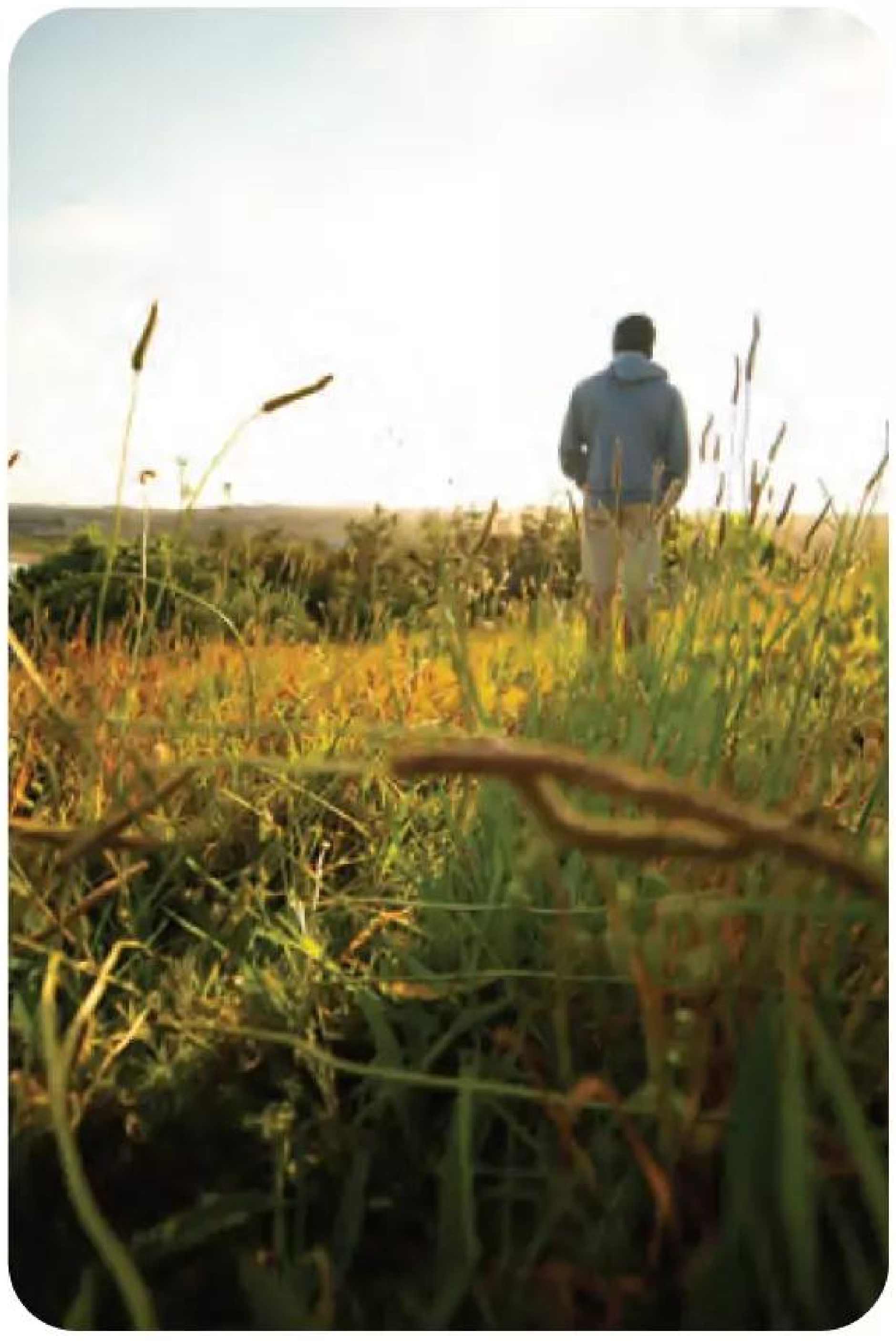
Although all forms of exercise are great, yoga often gets a lot of press for reducing stress as it actively promotes relaxation. By focusing on the body, mind and breathing techniques, yoga can help with both the psychological and physical aspects of stress.

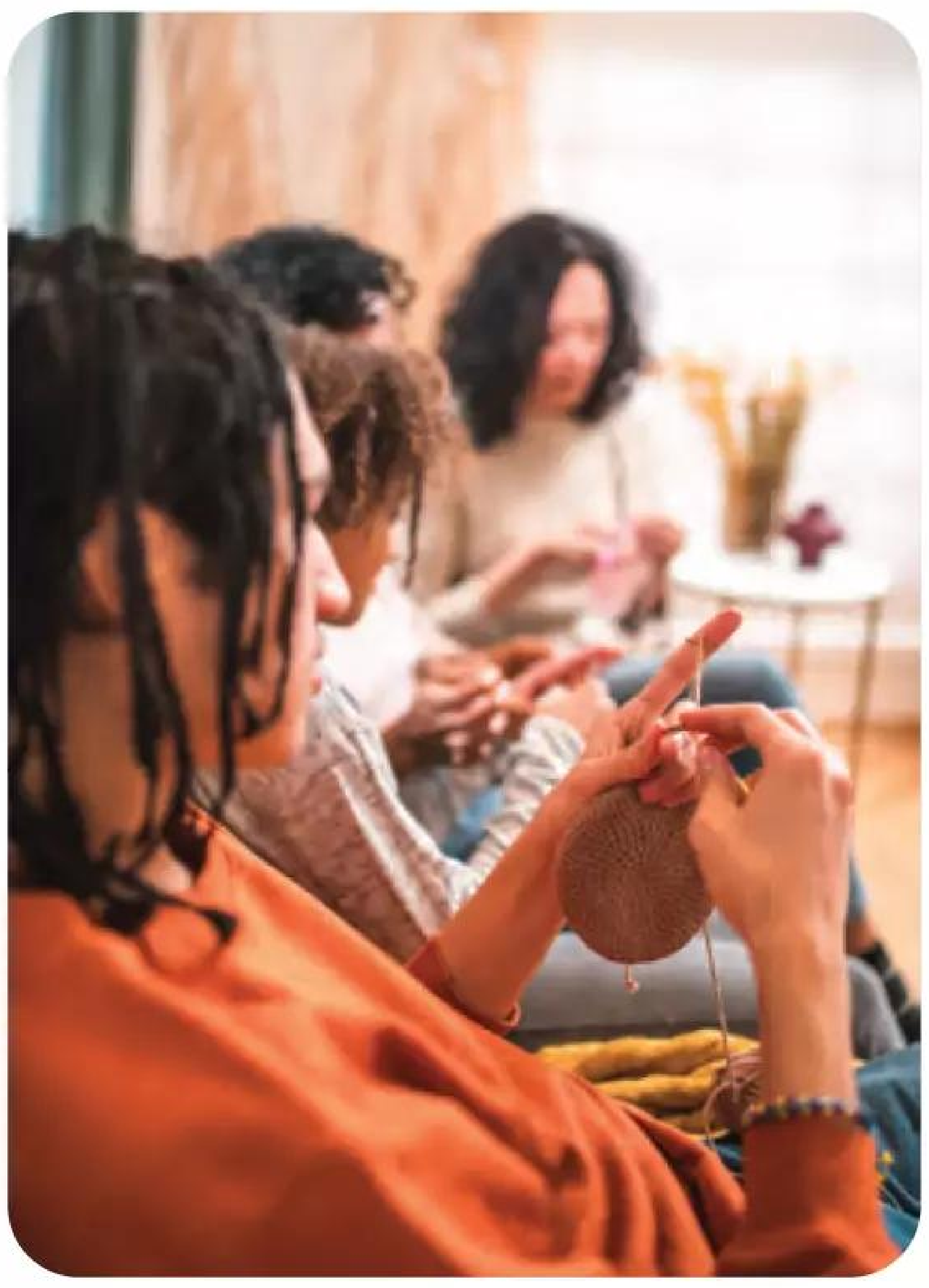
Some people turn to less healthy coping mechanisms, such as smoking, alcohol and eating unhealthy foods, to deal with their stress. Although they may provide temporary relief, these behaviours can negatively impact your mental health and even lead to addiction. They also increase inflammation levels in the body, which, when combined with stress, can worsen the risk of inflammatory diseases.

Everyone is unique, and there are loads of different stress-management strategies out there. Don't be afraid to try a few different things to see what works for you. Managing your stress in a healthy way can help you become more emotionally resilient and deal with the challenges life throws at you.

Go out into nature

Being outside is great for both the body and for the mind. Try to get outside every day, even if it is just for a short walk.



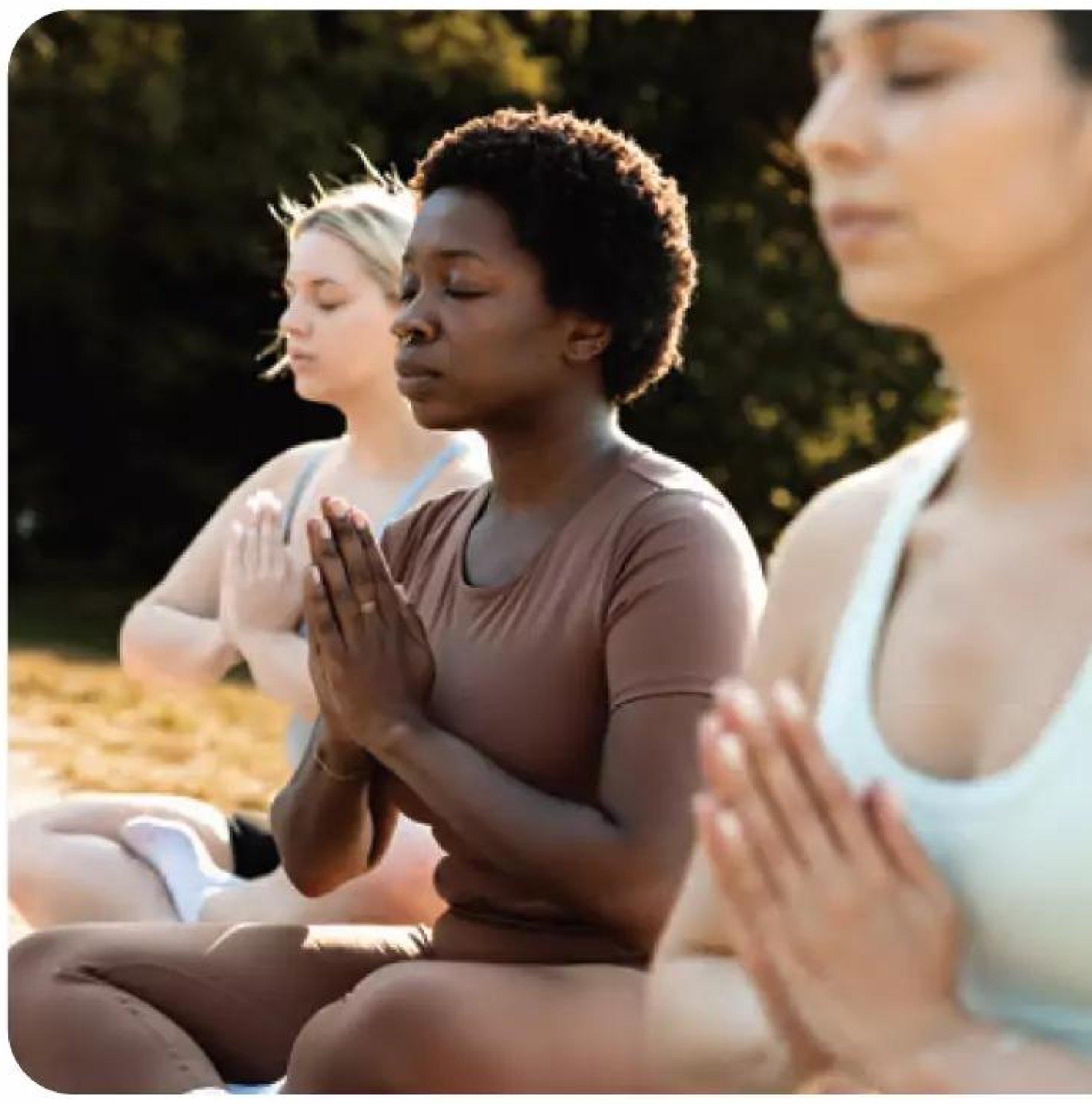


Work on your hobbies

Focusing on something you love can distract your brain from your stress. Not to mention, group hobbies are a great way to meet people and make connections.

Fit in some exercise

Exercise triggers the release of feel-good chemicals in the brain, so it can be a great way to manage your stress. Yoga is particularly good, but any exercise that you enjoy is great.



Is exercise-induced inflammation a friend or foe?

Words: Louise Pyne

Learn the warning signs of chronic inflammation and find out how to keep levels in check in order to maximise performance

There are lots of reasons you might choose to work out. Whether you exercise to de-stress, improve your physical health or boost your mood, engaging in regular physical activity is one of the fundamental pillars that drives wellbeing.

According to current guidelines, 150 minutes of moderate to intense exercise per week is what we should all be aiming for, but before you congratulate yourself for reaching the recommended quota, it's worth assessing if some of your workout habits could be holding you back from getting the results you want.

Inflammation is a natural by-product of exercise, but excessive or chronic inflammation can be harmful, and often results from regularly over-training, a lack of recovery, or choosing workouts that are too intense for your body's needs. "Inflammation naturally occurs as a result of all kinds of exercise. It's the first stage in repairing and coming back stronger. That's the definition of getting fitter. A well formulated training plan will exploit this to achieve your fitness goals. A bad plan can do the opposite, causing systemic inflammation," says Liam Grimley, co-founder of the 432 Fitness Platform (*432fitness.com*).

While inflammation is a natural phenomenon, elevated levels can pose a problem, because it compromises the body's immune cells, which also negatively affects how well you perform and recover.

Here are some of the best ways to make sure that inflammation doesn't hold you back from achieving the results that you're striving for.

Get enough sleep

After a particularly gruelling workout you need good sleep more than ever. "Sleep is a time when the body switches to rest, digest and repair mode, so reducing inflammation and healing happen during sleep," explains Grimley.

Aim to get the required seven to nine hours of slumber – this is especially important on workout days when your body has been through the mill. Setting up a relaxing bedtime environment and saying no to screens before bed will help you to achieve a good night's rest.

Strike a balance

With exercise, finding a workout that you enjoy will make you more motivated to lace up your trainers and get moving, but it's important to rotate different styles of exercise because too much of the same thing might not be best for your body. They say that variety is the spice of life and this also rings true when it comes to workouts.

"As a rule, high intensity workouts and classes should *not* form the most of your training week. Overdoing HIIT and intense competitive workout style

How to find the *perfect workout* for you

1 Experiment with different workout styles

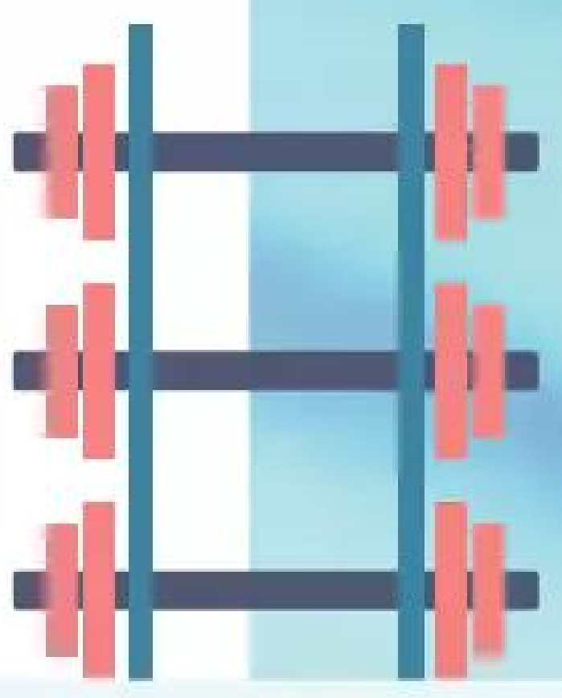
In order to find a workout that you enjoy it's worth experimenting with different types of physical movement. Be mindful of how you feel before and after your session and assess how much you enjoy the workout. If you experience any joint pain or extreme fatigue, the workout might not be your ideal choice.

2 Fit your workout into your lifestyle

For a long-term workout plan to be successful, it needs to slot nicely into your lifestyle. Perhaps you only have 30 minutes at lunchtime, so a half-an-hour spin class or brisk walk might be the best ways to get your cardio fix, or maybe you prefer keeping your exercise sessions to the early morning, in which case a leisurely jog could be a good way to energise you for the rest of the day ahead.

3 Consider your personality

Perhaps you prefer a social workout, in which case a running or walking club might suit you, or maybe you prefer solitary sessions, such as following a YouTube fitness workout at home. If you're a team player, joining a netball or hockey team could fit the bill, or, if you're looking to exercise with a buddy, a game of tennis or padel could give you the endorphin buzz you're craving.



sessions will lead to chronic inflammation, burnout and injury," shares Grimley.

Recover properly

Down days are an integral part of any good exercise routine. "You must do mobility and stretching regularly," explains Grimley.

Days off are a non-negotiable when it comes to reducing inflammation, because on these workout-free days you give your muscles a chance to recover so that you're primed for your next session.

Using a foam roller or massage gun are good ways to ease tension and inflammation in your body on these rest days. Stretching out quads, glutes and hips through yoga poses will also help to relieve any muscular pain.

Maximise protein

Exercise and nutrition go hand in hand and being mindful about what you eat can help to improve recovery and lower inflammation. Follow a wholefood diet with lots of protein, (you need around 25-30g per meal). A protein shake after your workout and protein-rich meals revolving around foods like chicken, red meat, eggs, tofu and legumes are a good way to obtain the protein that you require.

Add diversity

An abundance of colour in your diet will help to reduce inflammation, because vibrantly-hued fruits and vegetables are a source of antioxidants that help to counter the effects of inflammation. Aim for nine portions per day – while this might sound a lot, if you break this down into building each meal around three different types of fruits or vegetables it will be easier to ace the quota.

Don't ignore injuries

Injuries are your body's way of telling you that something is wrong, so don't give yourself a badge of honour for pushing through the pain – on the contrary, ignoring an injury can often lead to long-term inflammation and mobility issues.

Always prioritise rest in between sessions. When you are working out, don't feel like you have to push yourself to complete exhaustion. Ease off when things are getting too much in order to protect your body.

Know your exercise type

We are all unique individuals, so fitness requirements differ from one person to the next. For example, certain people are more prone to inflammation and stress-related issues, making intense high-impact workouts unsuitable. Anyone with adrenal fatigue, joint disorders, such as arthritis, or an autoimmune or cardiovascular condition, should avoid HIIT classes and focus on lower intensity training routines, such as yoga, pilates, walking or swimming. It's also worth bearing in mind that before embarking on any new workout plan you should always consult your doctor.

Introducing our experts

To make sure we're bringing you the most reliable, up-to-date information we've gathered a team of experts to write this issue for you...

VJ HAMILTON

VJ, founder of The Autoimmunity Nutritionist, is a leading expert in autoimmune disease, specialising in skin disorders, chronic fatigue, joint health and gut health. A Registered Nutritionist with a BSc in Biochemistry & Immunology, she empowers clients through her 1-2-1 functional medicine consultations, signature program The Inflammation RESET®, and hosts The Autoimmune RESET® podcast.

ROB HOBSON

Rob is an award-winning Registered Nutritionist, best-selling author, and TV expert with more than 20 years of experience. He works with private clients, top brands, and is resident nutritionist on *This Morning*. His latest book, *Unprocess Your Family Life*, is out now.

ZOE MILLER

Zoe is a health and medical writer and Doctor. Zoe studied biological sciences at Aston University, then went on to study medicine at Warwick University. After graduation, she worked as a Doctor within the West Midlands in urology, respiratory medicine, infectious disease, and psychiatry, before transitioning into a full-time medical communications role. Zoe is currently working as a freelance medical writer.

CHARLIE WATSON

Charlie is a Dietitian, mother and marathon runner. Her book *Cook Eat Run* shares a no-nonsense approach to eating for runners and athletes of all levels, and she is the host of the running nutrition podcast of the same name. Charlie previously worked as Deputy Cookery Editor at *Good Housekeeping* magazine and now works as an NHS Neuro Dietitian. She documents her life balancing running, travelling and chasing a toddler at therunnerbeans.com.

LOUISE PYNE

Louise is a CNHC Registered Nutritionist. With a special interest in women's wellbeing, Louise works with clients to get to the root of health issues to help restore optimum wellness. She is also a freelance health journalist and writes for a range of national publications on the subjects of health and wellbeing.

RACHEL IFANS

Rachel is a keen runner and outdoor adventurer in her spare time, but as her day job she's a journalist writing for publications like *Women's Running*, *The Independent*, *The i Paper*, *National Geographic* and the BBC. She used to smoke decades ago, but giving up is one of the achievements she's most proud of!

30 DAYS TO Anti-Inflammatory Diet

EDITOR/MD Sally FitzGerald
sally.fitzgerald@anthem.co.uk

ART EDITORS Sarah Clark, Matt Hunkin

DEPUTY EDITOR Holly Taylor
holly.taylor@anthem.co.uk

SUB EDITOR Bob Wade

HEAD OF ADVERTISING
Megan Gibbings
megan.gibbings@anthem.co.uk

HEAD OF MARKETING Cara Northcott

DIRECT MARKETING MANAGER
Rosie Pankhurst

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Brian Hook

LICENSING Regina Erak
regina.erak@globalworks.co.uk

CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER Jenny Cook

CEO Jon Bickley

PRINT
William Gibbons & Sons Ltd
+44 (0) 1902 730011

DISTRIBUTION
Marketforce UK, 121-141 Westbourne
Terrace, London W2 6QA 0330 390 6464
Hello@Marketforce.co.uk

All images © iStock.com unless otherwise stated

ANTHEM | PUBLISHING PPA

Media House, 1 Widcombe Parade, Bath BA2 4JT

Established 2002 Founding Directors:
Paul Pettengale, Simon Lewis, Jon Bickley

Anthem's purpose is to help people lead happier, healthier lives. As part of this, since 2019 Anthem has donated over £78,000 to charities connected with mental health, food banks, community projects and international aid.

All content copyright Anthem Publishing Ltd, 2025, all rights reserved. While we make every effort to ensure that the factual content is correct we cannot take any responsibility nor be held accountable for any factual errors printed. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or resold without the prior consent of Anthem Publishing Ltd. Anthem Publishing recognises all copyrights contained within this issue. Where possible we acknowledge the copyright holder.

CARBON BALANCED PAPER
WORLD LAND TRUST™
www.carbonbalancedpaper.com
CBP005731

What's next?

NEXT ISSUE

In our next issue we show you how to increase your protein intake with *30 Days To... More Protein.* The issue goes on sale 28th May 2025.

Congratulations, you've taken your first step in adopting an anti-inflammatory diet and learning healthy new habits, but how are you going to maintain your progress and keep on improving?

Deciding to start following an anti-inflammatory diet, learning what it consists of, and starting to build your healthy new habits over the course of the first 30 days are the hard bits, and you've achieved them. But now you need to decide how you want to continue your progress.

Our calendar on page 80 will help you to plan out your next 30 days, but what else do you need to do? Have you decided which habits you want to stick with? Are you happy that continuing with your new habits is enough for you, or would you benefit from trying an elimination diet with the help of a medical professional? Or maybe starting a food diary to track your symptoms and sensitivities as a first step (like our diary on page 87)?

Reflecting back over the last month is useful in deciding what you should do next, so here are some prompts to get you thinking...

How do you feel?

Take a moment to check in with yourself. Grab a pen and jot down your thoughts:

Physically:

Do you have more energy? Less bloating? Improved digestion? Any changes in pain or inflammation?

Mentally:

Has your mood improved? Do you feel clearer-headed?

Emotionally:

How do you feel about food now? How is your sleep?

You've got this!

Your journey doesn't end here – it's just the beginning! Keep listening to your body, making mindful choices and enjoying the benefits of an anti-inflammatory lifestyle.

Foods I want to keep eating regularly: *(list as many as you like)*

Meals I enjoy and will repeat:

Healthy habits I will stick with:

Ingredients I should avoid:

The biggest lesson I learned:

NEW GROOVY LOOK.
SAME GREAT TASTE.
Yeo Valley
ORGANIC
KEFIR
MANGO & PASSION FRUIT
ENERGY BOOST*
14 STRAINS OF LIVE CULTURES
LOVE YOUR GUT**
KEFIR NATURAL
KEFIR BLUEBERRY
KEFIR STRAWBERRY

GOOD. MOOD. FOOD.
FEAT. 14 STRAINS OF LIVE CULTURES

FIND YOUR DAILY GROOVE
WITH YEO VALLEY ORGANIC KEFIR

Available at ASDA, Morrisons, Ocado,
Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose.
Subject to availability.

YEO GOT THIS!